VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4 SEPTEMBER 1986
$2.95
CHEAP

Exploring the

EPSON WORLD

IN THIS ISSUE:

- VALDOCS and CPL
- Sprites and RSI BASIC
- MS-DOS Directories
- Color on the QX-10

And much more . . .

Software Critics Agree

SmartKey II Plus dramatically speeds up and improves accuracy in computing by letting you reduce multiple keystrokes to the touch of a single key. Thousands of practical applications. Available for both CP/M and MSDOS computers. Works to speed up your computing even while operating other software.

NEW!

SmartKey II Plus Combo Pak $49

—includes SmartPrint II Plus and Screen Smarts

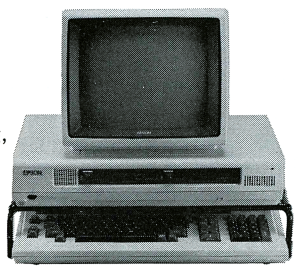
Teach SmartKey to recall software commands, words, paragraphs, or entire pages of data at the touch of a key. Make a series of "smartkeys" out of most of the keys on your Epson. Store "smartkey" definitions in a special file. Call them up whenever you want to run a favorite program or work on a project. Imagine saving complex software command codes, boilerplate paragraphs, inventory numbers, or whatever, and then injecting any of them into your work with the stroke of a key. SmartKey will not interfere with the regular operation of your keyboard. Indeed, SmartKey enhances your keyboard.

The Critics on SmartKey

- "Excellent..." *InfoWorld*
- "Works like a charm..." *MicroSystems*
- "A must for every computer..." Peter McWilliams, author *The Word Processing Book*
- "SmartKey is a utility I recommend... ...The result is less frustration and greater speed and accuracy in entering data." John D. Yoder, PhD *Reviewer — Epson Connection*
- "...SmartKey is considerably easier to learn ...SmartKey would be my choice..." Bob Hermann *Reviewer — Epson Connection*

Central's super priced **$49** *SmartKey II* combo pak includes *SmartPrint II Plus*, a program that greatly enhances the operation of dot matrix printers, and a free copy of Paul Golding's $15.95 book, *Screen Smarts, The Computer Tamer's Guide*. This book tells how you can use SmartKey to turn your computer into a supercharged mean machine. Order today to get this hard hitting $115 software & book combo for only $49.

Perfect Epson Stand



Simple, strong, sturdy, safe. These words describe an attractive stand that provides a perfect spot to place your Epson computer and monitor on. This stand is made from rounded, steel rods covered with a thick, shiny, soft, black polymer material that protects your Epson and table top from scratches. Unlike flat wood or acrylic panels used in other stands, the tough supporting rods of the Smart Stand (TM) do not obstruct air flow. Since your Epson is lifted off the table top and fully supported by this stand, air flows freely all around your computer to help keep it cool. When you need more space, simply slide the keyboard completely under the stand to create a working area on your desk. The Epson Smart Stand is a super value at $34. Try it for 15 days risk free. If not completely satisfied, return it for full refund. Matching 80 or 132 column printer stands are only $21.95. Order today. Get it fast.

Introducing A Classic Form Fitting Epson Cover

Now Available. Equity computer form fitting covers.
Same low prices and quality tailoring.

At last, the classic Epson dust cover you'll be proud to own and use. This first rate computer cover is made from a premium, lint free, static free, washable, free breathing, and fade resistant sailcloth. It comes in a rich looking Navy blue or Sand. The Navy cover has a smart contrasting silver gray piping and trim that adds a superior finished look. Not to be outdone, the Sand cover is handsomely finished in a rich chocolate piping and trim.

Matching sailcloth covers for all Epson and ComRiter printers: $15.95. Please indicate make and model of printer.
New. Special 2-piece computer covers: $23.95 per set.

For a limited time only, your price for this factory direct, custom made, one-piece sailcloth Quality Cover is $19.95. When ordering remember to indicate color preference. This special low price is subject to change. You must be completely satisfied with your purchase of this cover or we will refund your money immediately. Order today.

- Quality tailoring
- Easy care fabrics
- Attractive colors
- Professional appeal

FACTORY DIRECT

Richly tailored inside and out. Look inside any of our Quality Covers; see the ultimate finishing; we use machines that sew with 3 needles so that edges will not unravel or shed lint. We stress perfection because you deserve the best. Compare for long-lasting satisfaction.

Letter Quality

Say goodbye to correspondence qual
high–resolution, proportionally spa
Font provides fonts in sizes from
Roman, Bold, Italic, Script, Old En
low–cost Epson (MX, RX, FX) and
Font is an easy–to–use software pa
compatible systems; no special hardv

Actual sample produced by an MX-80 and Fancy Font.

Incredible Printing Machine

Your Epson printer is going to get even better. *Fancy Font* can make it into an incredible printing machine. The *Fancy Font System* is a software program that turns the bits and bytes generated by your computer into over 30 font sets in sizes from 8 to 40 points that can be printed on any Epson MX80 with Graftrax, Epson FX or RX printer, or Gemini 10X printer.

Fancy Font styles include Roman, Bold, Italic, Script, Old English, and more. In addition, custom forms, invoices, labels, signs, foreign languages, mathematical notations, view graphs, resumes, newsletters, brochures, complete manuals, invitations, place cards, and high-resolution, proportionally spaced, letter quality business and personal letters can all be printed on your Epson printer with *Fancy Font* at the helm. *Fancy Font* is a product of SoftCraft Inc. You may have seen SoftCraft's national ads. They are printed with *Fancy Font* on an Epson printer. The ad is powerful visual medicine. The list price for the fully documented *Fancy Font System* is $180. Central's price is only $159. Order *Fancy Font* today and add an amazing sparkle of creativity to all your printed materials. Please indicate name and model of your printer when ordering. *Fancy Font* will make your Epson printer and Valdocs or CP/M word processor come alive. It's magical.

MORE ON NEXT PAGE

Radiation Screen

It's true. Computer terminals shoot dangerous ionizing x-rays at the operator. Exposure to ionizing radiation is cummulative. It doesn't wear off. Bit by bit, it keeps piling on. Too much exposure can lead to radical molecular changes. The kind of changes in the body that express themselves in cancer.

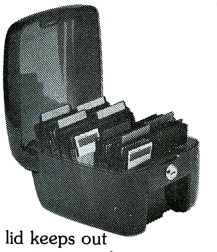
Sure, medical professionals use x-radiation to take pictures of the inside of your body, and to look through your face at your teeth. But, they know the danger of exposure to x-rays. That's why, when they work they stand behind lead impregnated shields. They're smart. They protect themselves.

If you're a computer user, the solution isn't to throw your computer out the window. It's easy to protect yourself against the ionizing x-rays that shoot out at you from your video display terminal. A company called ACCO International makes an excellent combination lead impregnated radiation shield and anti-glare screen that easily attaches to your terminal. It works. In fact, an independent study found that for every 1,000,000 x-rays your video display terminal shoots at you, only 125 will pass through the ACCO Shield. Solid protection.

The ACCO Radiation Shield is just like the ones used in hospitals, nuclear power plants, and at military stations. It's made from a lead impregnated, impact-resistant acrylic. Although the ACCO Shield is 30% lead, you can see through it. The ACCO Shield also doubles as a superior anti-glare screen that reduces glare and other bothersome reflections. The list price of the ACCO Radiation screen is $149. Central's price is $99. Order today. Satisfaction guaranteed. 15 day money back trial. Also comes with a free report that tells how the ACCO Shield stops radiation. Order today.

Attention: Consider that working at a video display terminal is like holding your face about 18 inches from a television screen many hours a day, five days a week. Protection makes sense. Order today.

Lockable Diskette Defender



Handsome, sturdy, smoke-tinted acrylic tray holds 70 Epson-size diskettes. Flip-up lid keeps out dust, debris, and moisture, and locks securely to guard your important work. Comes with 7 dividers with index tabs for easy filing and to keep floppies upright to prevent bending, warping, and scratching. Tough and secure metal lock never comes in contact with diskettes because it is enclosed in a special plastic housing. Super value at $22.95 for one, or $21.00 each if you buy 2 or more. Keep prying eyes and sticky fingers away from your data. Order today.

LQ 1500 Users

Compare and save. Epson's LQ 1500 ribbon gives you 3,000,000 characters. Our top quality LQ 1500 ribbon produces 4,500,000 characters. Epson's list price is $17.50 per ribbon. Our price is $49 for box of six ribbons. In stock. Order today. Complete Satisfaction Guaranteed.

Toll Free Order Desk
800-533-8049 USA
800-624-5628 CA

Check Your MailBox — Central's Free 64 Page Catalog is Coming Next Month

Product Description	List	Central
Epson CP/M and MSDOS Software		
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CP/M	$ 39.95	$ 34.00
MBasic — **Training software.**	$ 39.95	$ 34.00
Multiplan — **Speeds learning.**	$ 75.00	$ 59.00
SuperCalc — **Gives fast results.**	$ 75.00	$ 59.00
Wordstar	$ 75.00	$ 59.00
BORLAND INTERNATIONAL		
Turbo Pascal 3.0	$ 69.95	$ 58.00
Turbo Toolbox, Software Tools	$ 54.95	$ 47.00
Turbo Tutor, Step by Step	$ 34.95	$ 32.00
Turbo Holiday Pak, All the Above	$129.95	$ 99.95
CDE SOFTWARE		
Checks & Balances, Home Accounting	$ 74.95	$ 65.00
CONSULTANT SYSTEMS		
The Real Estate Consultant	$399.00	$349.00
with The Creative Loan Consultant		
Don't buy or sell property without this software		
CUSTOM PROGRAM HOUSE		
Banner Plus	$ 37.95	$ 19.95
— Print you own huge banners & messages		
DIGITAL MARKETING/PRO TEM		
Bibliography	$ 99.00	$ 89.00
Milestone, Project Manager	$ 99.00	$ 89.00
Random House Speller	$ 50.00	$ 47.00
— Call for WordStar enhancing DM/PT products		
EXECUTIVE SOFTWARE		
Decision Analyst, Business Tool	$139.00	$124.00
FYI, INC.		
FYI 3000	$295.00	$250.00
INFOCOM		
Zork I	$ 39.95	$ 37.00
Zork II & III each	$ 44.95	$ 42.95
PlanetFall	$ 39.95	$ 37.00
Witness	$ 39.95	$ 37.00
— all other Infocom series instock, please call for prices		
MENDOCINO SOFTWARE		
Eureka, Automatic Disk Cataloger NEW	50.00	$ 47.00
MICRONOVA		
FontStar, Print Bright WordStar	$ 49.95	$ 48.00
MICROPRO		
WordStar	$495.00	$219.00
Mail Merge	$ 99.00	$ 89.00
MICROSOFT		
MultiPlan	$195.00	$139.00
MBasic Compiler	$295.00	$259.00
MICROSOLUTIONS		
Uniform	$ 69.95	$ 59.95
— reads & writes 90+ compu-formats including PC/MSDOS		
MYCROFT LABS		
Mite Communciations	$150.00	$121.00
OASIS SYSTEMS		
The Word Plus	$150.00	$115.00
Punctuation and Style	$125.00	$ 99.00
PEARLSOFT		
Personal Pearl	$295.00	$125.00
PLU-PERFECT SYSTEMS		
CP/M DateStamper	$ 49.00	$ 47.00
SAN FRANCISCO COMP		
Power, CP/M Tamer	$169.00	$ 99.00
DocuPower	$169.00	$ 99.00
SOFTAIDS		
MTBasic Compiler	$ 49.95	$ 47.00
SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS		
Airport, Traffic Controller	$ 19.95	$18.00
Autodiff	$ 29.95	$ 27.00
C/80, C Language	$ 49.95	$ 47.00
Eliza	$ 24.95	$ 23.00
Word Wiggle	$ 29.95	$ 28.00
MyChess	$ 34.95	$ 29.95
Reading Professor, Speed Read	$ 59.95	$ 57.00
— for all other Toolworks programs, please call for prices		
SOFTWARE RESEARCH TECH		
Touch 'n' Go, Typing Tutor	$ 29.95	$ 26.00
dFastest, dBase file supercharger	$ 79.95	$ 69.00
SORCIM		
SuperCalc 2	$295.00	$228.00
TELION SOFTWARE		
Free Filer	$ 49.95	$ 47.00
Language Tutor	$ 49.95	$ 46.00
Memory Trainer	$ 49.95	$ 46.00
UNISON WORLD		
Printmaster Graphics NEW	111 pics	$ 49.95
Art Gallery I Graphics	140 pics	$ 49.95
Creative Printmaster book	$ 13.95	$ 12.50
— Get *Creative* book free with purchase of both programs		
WRITING CONSULTANTS		
Word Finder, 90,000 Synonyms	$124.00	$ 74.00
Supplies		
3M DSDD Diskettes	10/box	$17.00
3M Head Cleaning Kit	$ 32.00	$ 21.00
PowerMax, 250 Watt UPS	$459.00	$399.00
Finger Print "Letter Writer"	$ 79.95	$ 74.00
QX-10 User's Guide, Hansen	$ 17.95	$ 15.95
Screen Smarts, Computer Tamer	$ 15.95	$ 12.95

Prices, specifications, and offers subject to change without notice.

Software to Boost and Keep High Scores

Now you can help your child boost or maintain his grades. It's easy. Resource Software International's educational programs are specially made to help kids get to the top and stay there.

Imagine this. If properly prepared, your boy or girl can be accepted by the college of your choice — no matter how many other students are clamoring for admission. RSI software is created by educators. It lets the child choose the pace of instruction. Challenging computer assisted learning at its best. Available for both CP/M and MSDOS computers. The list price of these programs is $39.95 each. Central's price is only $37 each. They are fun, educational, and easy to use. Order today.

Description	Grade Level	Description	Grade Level
Let's Have Fun Counting	1-3	Algebra	8-college
Simple Addition	1-3	Trigonometry	8-college
Let's Have Fun Subtracting	1-3	Geometry	8-college
Long Division	3-4	Elementary Chemistry	8-college
Funzeez	2-5	Basic Inorganic Terminology	8-college
Learning and Using Fractions	5-7	Chemical Symbols	8-college
Learning and Using Decimals	5-7	Inorganic Nomenclature II	8-college
Vocab Building	4-7	Metrics	7-12
Verb I	6-8	High School Entrance Exam	6-8
Letter Writing	6-8	SAT Score Builder	10-12

Text Filing Machine

Now, Epson users can turn their computers into powerful text filing machines. *SuperFile* is a textual matter database manager unlike any other. It puts you in control of your information. It allows you to easily store and retrieve notes, letters, random thoughts, contracts, depositions, invoices, new product information, sales reports, reference articles, scripts, abstracts, bibliographies, customer profiles, photo or slide locations, and much more. *SuperFile* accepts as many as 65,000 entries per database; allows 512,000 keystrokes per record, each of which can have up to 250 keywords; and indexes information you've stored on as many as 255 diskettes per database. Powerful.

Input for a *SuperFile* database comes from your word processing Valdocs, CP/M, or MSDOS program, so you can easily include information you already have into a database without having to re-key it. No fancy fields to define. This is a completely free-form database system. No programming language to learn. There's nothing difficult here. You can be up and running within minutes. *SuperFile* uses logical searching procedures to find your information fast. Tell *SuperFile* what information you want, and it searches from 60 to 400 entries per second. Save yourself the time and effort of filing and cross-filing information by hand or in overly structured data fields. The list price of *SuperFile* is $195. Order today to get *SuperFile* at our current low price of $155.

Full Power Computing

T/Maker Integrated is a highly acclaimed powerhouse program that can turn your CP/M Epson into a computing workhorse. At last, you can enjoy productive computing like never before. Imagine doing full-featured word processing, relational database management, spreadsheet analysis, horizontal bar chart graphics, and checking your spelling all within the same program. No more switching back and forth between barely compatible programs to accomplish these simple tasks. *T/Maker Integrated* is universally acknowledged as a unique integrated software system that is just plain easy to learn. Now, there is an alternative to doing things the hard way. *T/Maker* can put the hidden and largely untapped power of your Epson at your command. *T/Maker Integrated* is regularly $450. Central is proud to offer this outstanding package for the low, low introductory price of $189. Yes, this includes the entire feature-packed T/Maker package, so please treat yourself to this excellent super productive software today. Experience the power of true software integration on your Epson. Order T/Maker today. Offer may not repeat, so order now.

Central Computer Products

Consult the Oracle

NEW!

Wow! The *I Ching* on computer. There's nothing like it. This great self-reflection aid can help you get in touch with your subsconscious mind. The *I Ching* or *Book of Change* is not a party game. But it's highly entertaining. Ask it for advice and receive it in seconds. Amazing.

The *I Ching* or *Book of Change* seems to give you the ability to peer into the future. Helps you see where you've been and where certain courses of action could take you. In this sense, the *I Ching* is like a trusted oracle. Someone to consult in time of need. You'll marvel at the I Ching's depth. It's both mysterious and practical. If you've had contact with the *I Ching* before, you'll find this software faithful to the original manuscript. The only difference is you consult this program through touching the spacebar to develop your hexagrams. Very easy to use. The list price of Software Country's *I Ching* or *Book of Change* program is $39. Central's price is $36. Order today to get fast.

CENTRAL COMPUTER PRODUCTS
330 Central Avenue, Dept. R2
Fillmore, California 93015
(805) 524-4189

Dear Central,

Please send me the items listed below. I want fast friendly service. If I have ordered SmartKey, remember to send me my free copy of *Screen Smarts, The Computer Tamer's Guide*. My check, money order, or credit card number is enclosed. Thank you.

Description	Price

Epson Model _____ Sub Total _____

CA Resident 6% Tax _____

FIRM MONEY BACK GUARANTEE ORDER WITH CONFIDENCE Postage & Handling $ 3.00

Total $ _____

☐ Navy blue Cover ☐ Sand Cover
☐ Check enclosed ☐ Money Order enclosed

☐ Visa/Mastercard # _____

☐ AmerExp Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ Sig. _____

Day Phone: ( ) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Credit card phone orders accepted. **Call Toll Free.**
To order by mail use coupon, letter, or photo copy. Thank you.

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Epson World

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Subscriptions:
Subscriptions are $32 for 12 issues. Please inquire for delivery rates outside the U.S. Dealer inquiries invited. Free disk of the month to first five who report reading this text.

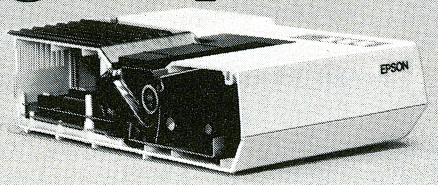
ISSN 8755-1047

Attention all FX80, FX100, JX, RX, & MX owners:

You already own half of a great printer

Now Only $79.95

Dealer inquiries welcome.



Now for $79.95 you can own the rest. You see, today's new dot matrix printers offer a lot more.

Like an NLQ mode that makes their letters print almost as sharp as a daisy wheel. And font switching at the touch of a button in over 160 styles. But now, a Dots-Perfect upgrade kit will make your printer work like the new models in minutes— at a fraction of their cost.

And FX, JX and MX models will print the IBM character set, too.

So, call now and use your Visa, MasterCard, or AmerEx. Don't replace your printer, upgrade it!

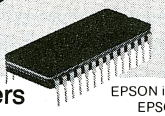
1-800-368-7737
In California: 1-800-831-9772

Sample of letter with Dots-Perfect

Dots-Perfect™
Dresselhaus

Sample of letter without Dots-Perfect

837 E. Alosta Ave., Glendora, CA 91740 Tel: (818) 914-5831



An upgrade kit for EPSON FX, JX, RX, & MX printers

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NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

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- **HOME MONEY MGR. (HMM)** — The easy-to-use checkbook and budgeting software. Handles check, credit, cash and ATC transactions. 12 check registers, 12 credit registers and 3,000+ transactions per data disk. Split transactions. Printed reports. If you make a mistake, correct it at any time with one of two editors. Plus HMM keeps a full year of financial records on a single disk. Epson World called HMM, *"unusually complete, simple to use, the best I've seen."* $59.95
- **HMM-II** — Increases the power of HMM to include flagging of tax deductible items, check printing, over 900 expense categories, up to 3000 transactions per register, reconcile multiple registers. $89.95
- **HOME INSURANCE** — Home inventory and record keeping system. Automatic adjustment for inflation, multiple searches, fast and flexible. $34.95
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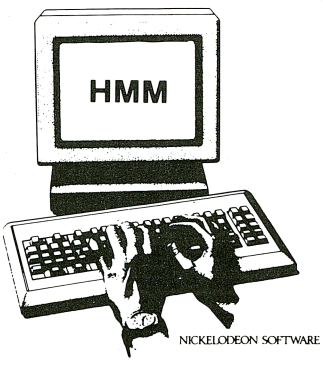
- **HMM PERSONAL ASSET MGR.** — Combines all of the above. $129.95
- If other software has been confusing and difficult to use, then try us. We've built our reputation on making quality, easy-to-use software.



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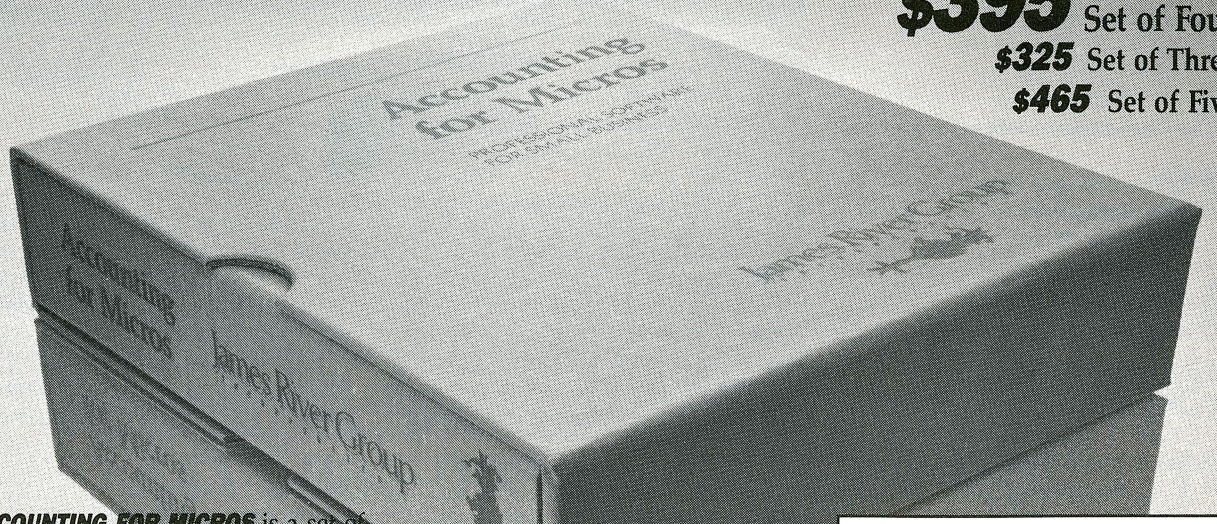
$395 Set of Four
$325 Set of Three
$465 Set of Five



ACCOUNTING FOR MICROS is a set of integrated accounting programs which meet professional standards. They're fast and easy to use, with complete instructions. Our manual (shown above) also includes helpful information on bookkeeping and computers.

GENERAL LEDGER $125
Allows up to 1,000 accounts & 1,000 transactions/month. Retains mo/end balances for Last year, This Year and Forecast. Includes Cash Disbursements, Cash Receipts and General Journals. Reports include Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Annual Summaries and Journal Reports.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE $125
Allows up to 2,500 customers and 1,000 invoices per month. Invoicing can access Inventory Module. Keeps customer names and addresses. Invoice prints on plain paper or any pre-printed form. Statements can be printed at any time.

INVENTORY $125
Allows up to 4,000 parts. Keeps 3 month history of unit sales as well as year to date. With AR, can be used as point of sale system (prints invoices, handles cash). Reports include Inventory Value and Stock Report, Internal and Customer Price List.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE $125
Allows up to 500 vendors and 600 invoices/mo. Records invoices and handwritten checks. Prints computer checks on any pre-printed form. Keeps vendor names and addresses.

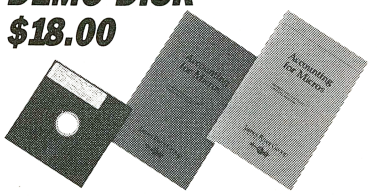
PAYROLL $125
Will handle up to 100 employees with six deductions per employee. Deductions may be determined as fixed dollar amounts or percentages, or referred to a table for automatic look-up. Tax tables are easily entered, or purchased separately.

SET OF FIVE $465
SET OF FOUR $395
SET OF THREE $325

RUN ON MOST CPM AND MSDOS

Apple CPM	*IBM PC,XT,PC jr,AT*	*Sanyo (all)*
Columbia	*Kaypro (all)*	*Tandy (all)*
Compaq	*Morrow (all)*	*TeleVideo*
Corona	*Osborne (all)*	*Zenith 100 & 150*
Eagle (all)	*Panasonic*	*8" CPM*
Epson QX-10	*Radio Shack CPM*	*Other compatibles*

DEMO DISK $18.00



Try all 5 programs above (GL, AR, AP, IN, PR). Order our DEMO DISK for $18.00 (includes shipping). Condensed versions of the programs give you the "feel" of data entry and access. Includes sample reports and instructions. Specify machine.

TRASHMAN (NEW) $145
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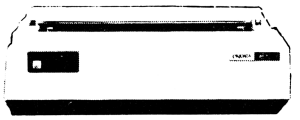

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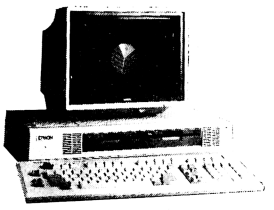

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The Deal of the Century

Ever wonder how the liquidators got hold of the QX-16's and other Epson equipment? Here's how one of them started out simply trying to make a buck but ended up hooked on Valdocs and serving our community as a focal point for technical support.

By R. D. Talasek, Jr.

How many times have you attended a social event where the conversation turns to business opportunities and someone has a tip on the "deal of the century"? This was my experience back in November of 1985.

I listened with a grain of salt as the tipster told the story of large quantity of micro-computer office automation systems being bartered by a major Japanese manufacturer in return for national advertising. The word "barter" perked me up.

I've heard about barter deals, having been involved in the data processing industry for all of my professional life and being the self-styled entrepreneurial type, I had to follow up on this one if just to find out if it was real.

Much to my surprise, it turned out that Epson America had indeed bartered the entire inventory of QX-16 micro-computers and they were available for purchase in quantity blocks. I set out to qualify the deal and bought a sample for review. This was the one I'd been waiting for!

The QX-16 was (and still is) the closest thing to appliance mode computing I've yet seen. The purchaser of this computer could actually expect to be productive within mere hours of unpacking the QX-16 without a degree in computer science!

I decided that now was time to strike and contacted my friend and associate Gary Snyder and outlined the deal to him. He liked it enough to arrange a meeting with some venture capital contacts and International Trading Corporation was born in a matter of days.

A large purchase of QX-16 units was arranged and we were off to the races.

Much to our chagrin, we soon found ourselves competing with Memco, the same company who sold us our computers. Our problem was simple. Memco was selling single units to end users at the same price we were paying them for hundred unit quantities.

We suffered along with all QX owners in that the value of these excellent machines was being undermined; worse yet for us, we had no profit margin. The situation was much like a grocery store buying eggs from a farmer who is selling at the same price next door.

(Ed. note: Maybe so, but we consumers had a field day!)

Rather than go broke (just then, at least), we decided to withdraw and let the dust settle while we tried to find an exclusive product elsewhere in the market.

During the following months we were able to purchase all of the remaining QX-16 hard disk systems and the entire inventory of incredible Q804A high resolution color monitors for the QX-10s and QX-16s. Meanwhile, most of the QX-16 floppy systems were sold and now, after all of the confusion, ITC is essentially the main source for QX-16s left.

Although we started this adventure as purely a marketing deal, we were soon hooked by Valdocs+III and the remarkable QX-16. This hardware-software combination is now used throughout our offices (and in some cases, our homes) and we look forward to many years of

Deal—Continued on page 7

Deal—Continued from page 6

productivity from our "writer's machine".

Since joining the Epson community, ITC has become a licensed distributer for Valdocs-PLUS III and the Logitech LOGI-MOUSE C7. We also provide technical support for the QX-16. Call when you need help; we'll do whatever we can over the phone whether or not you bought your computer from us.

ITC has also set up an EPSON specific public bulletin board system for public domain software dissemination and recycled equipment ads. It's free and for everyone to use. Call it at (213) 551-3143 or use our E-MAIL system for more private messages at (213) 551-3139.

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This Month's Cover

Supplies of the QX-16 are still available, although they are becoming more limited. Prices have actually started to rise, and are now in the $900-$1000 range for dual floppy systems and $1400 for those with internal 10 megabyte hard drives. What bitter irony; just a few months ago Epson couldn't even give them away and now suppliers are having trouble filling the demand. Even used QX-10 prices are on the rise. Could everyone be wrong, or did Epson quit too soon? Our cover photo is courtesy International Trading Corp. ★

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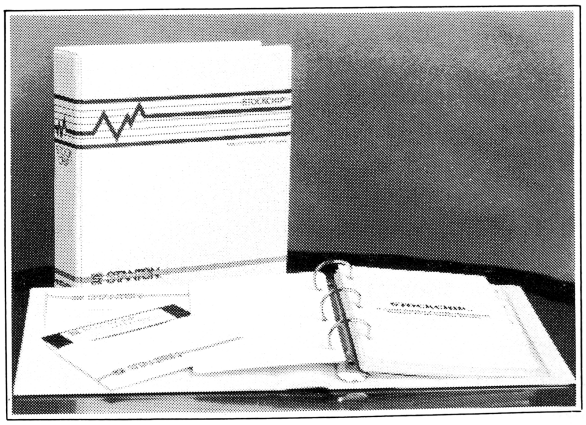

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The VALDOCS Chronicles

Lonny Brown, Editor

Est. 1986 *"We cared enough to wait for the very best"* Vol. 1, No. 1

Confessions of a VALcoholic

By Lonny J. Brown

Welcome to The VALDOCS Chronicles! This column is for loyal QX/VALDOCS users. I was chosen to write it because I'm one. I've used VALDOCS on my QX-10 almost exclusively since 1983, with great satisfaction, and have always been eager to share my enthusiasm for it. (I was the only Field Market Rep in the state of New Hampshire, in RSI's now-defunct marketing-support scheme).

My bliss is not from ignorance. Although I started out 100% computer illiterate, (that's one reason I chose this super-friendly, english language system), I've made it a point to become a well-informed home user, and as a reviewer for other computer magazines I've had plenty of exposure to "state of the art" word processors and desktop and laptop hardware. I have always been more than happy to come home to VALDOCS, with which I've written two books, maintain a mailing list, and figure my finances.

At a time when 16 Bit, IBM/MS-DOS compatibility is a near universal standard, this column will be good therapy for all of us HASCI "hackers". So I'm coming out of the computer closet, folks...It's been an agonizing affair, but I LOVE MY VALDOCS!

If it were not for the horrendous delays in its release schedule, VALDOCS and the trusty, well-engineered QX would have been big winners in those critical early years of the PC derby, and software vendors would now be advertising "HASCI-TPM-VALDOCS Compatible" products instead of IBM MS-DOS. As it is, we're the lucky minority who found it and took it home.

It is important that we separate our emotions about Epson and Rising Star (the folks who brought you the term "next month"), from our perceptions of Valdocs + III. True, VALDOCS has become a casualty of fatally slow development, an early reputation for bugs, a bitter corporate divorce, and the DOS wars. But the interminable waiting is over, and it has been worth it!

Without exception, Val-vets who get their hands on it agree: "Plus Three VALDOCS is now a mature, brilliantly designed, fully integrated, nearly bugless system that is, in many ways, still years ahead of its time."

Don't let hard-earned cynicism cloud your view: Chris

VALcoholic—Continued on page 9

CPL Makes Everyone a Programmer!

One of the most unique and powerful features of VALDOCS+III is CPL, the Console Programming Language. The second generation version of the original VALDOCS "macro" command writing tool DEFKEY, CPL is easier to use, smarter, and much more visual. Residing under "Control U" in all applications, CPL saves time and simplifies keyboard chores. Use it to accomplish frequently called, multiple keystroke tasks with one control key. Any regular keyboard operation or series of instructions to your computer can be customized and abbreviated using CPL.

For example, when writing rough drafts in the EDITor, or reading from disk files, you can have more text on-screen (and with less scrolling) if both margins are set as wide as the screen. It normally takes about a dozen keystrokes (count 'em if you don't believe me!) to change both margins from the default setting of one inch on each side. This can be accomplished with CPL by simply pressing CTRL and the chosen number on the numeric keypad to which you assigned this function.

The Capture Buffer, an added

CPL—Continued on page 9

CPL—Continued from page 8

bonus with CPL, eliminates the need to write out definitions as required by with DEFKEY; it remembers and plays back your keystrokes automatically! Functions are defined and established by simply typing the sequence into the capture buffer. Once in the buffer you can "try out" your new command by playing it back, then editing as needed. No more drudge.

Here are some ideas for a set of EDIT.CPL definitions:

* Mark current paragraph as a block.
* Paragraph indent on/off.
* Underline previous word.
* Interchange last two letters or words.
* Throw away current document and RETRIEVE the last file stored.
* Working on an article about Constantinople? Store the frequently-used name in the temporary CPL file, and you won't have to keep writing it out, risking typo's each time!
* Keep specialized libraries of terms in CPL files on Disk. (i.e., one for chemistry reports, another for anthropology, etc.)

* Designate one function for printing the current document in draft mode, another for correspondence quality.

The last one is especially useful, eliminating many unnecessary trips to the PRINT SETUP menu, when you can't remember if the correspondence toggle was left on "Y" or "N", or when you need to change it. This job normally takes ten keystrokes.

CPL—Continued on page 10

VALcoholic—Continued from page 8

Rutkowski is a genius, in software design, if not in business.

I know what's wrong with Valdocs. It's sometimes slow and nearly always disk intensive. It takes up lots of room on disks, and files sometimes actually grow with use. It's locked out of compatibility with new products, and it will probably never be updated again. But it will never wear out or be less useful than it is today; ten years from now Valdocs will work just as well as it does right now as long as you don't erase the disks!

In the months to come, we'll talk about these problems and any bugs we find. Like most, I have my wish list. Like a VALDOCS Thesaurus to go with its elegant dictionary and an outliner within the Editor. But given the uncertain predicament of its beleaguered parent (Rising Star), complaining much now would be almost like beating a dead horse.

In any case, VALDOCS' few shortcomings are vastly outweighed by its numerous features, and the happy task of showing them all to you is now mine, as long as the rest of you die-hard Val-heads want to read about it. Neophytes too may well take note, for believe it or not, VALDOCS on a QX is still the most friendly, fun and quickest introduction to personal computing available.

If you can try it, the combination might spoil you for the other, more cryptic systems on the market, and "obsolete" as it may be, for well under $800, a new, over-engineered HASCI-VAL QX computer might very well be the best choice for your home or office! The combination still is right for me.

I feel sorry for those stuck in Valdocs 1.x, or that premature orphan, VALDOCS 2. I know you've heard it all before, but my strong advice to QX users who haven't yet purchased VAL+III (there are thousands of you) is to simply chalk it up to fate. Don't deny yourself the satisfaction of using your machine to its full capacity. You're crazy not to get Plus III.

Among the VALDOCS topics we'll be discussing in later columns: Optimizing on the talents of our fabulous INDEXER, making customized and hybrid system boot disks, speed-up options and strategies along with ventures into the Spreadsheet, Checkbook, and Valpaint, and of course ongoing explorations into the many capabilities of the EDITOR, which is probably by far the module you spend most of your time in. In this issue we introduce CPL, the Console Programming Language, a wizard macro commander that succeeds DEFKEY as VALDOCS' meta-language.

You can help others in the Val-community by sending us your ideas, DEFKEY/CPL inventions, bug discoveries, short-cuts, and questions about VALDOCS. If you have a modem, you can get in touch with us over EW's bulletin board system. (Call it at 603-487-2501). Probably by the time you've read this we'll have a separate message area set up for Val-survivors where we can talk directly to one another.

Or you can use old fashioned US Mail. Write me, Lonny Brown, c/o Epson World, PO Box 369, New Boston, NH, 03070. Get in touch! Together we can make sure that we're all making optimal use of a classical system that will never wear out.★

CPL—Continued from page 9

Temporary moves are also definable. Suppose you have a page-long document full of vertical columns of text, and they all have to be moved several spaces to the right and underlined. It's a tedious job at best and involves going to the word, insert-tabbing right, toggling the underliner on, going to the end of the word, toggling off the underliner, moving down to the next line, and repeating the entire process. But by "teaching" the capture buffer, you can get away with doing it only the first time; after that you can sit back and watch VALDOCS cruise through the rest!

Complete files of CPL definitions for each VALDOCS module can be stored, and the system will automatically use the set saved for the Valdocs module currently in use. Thus, when EDITing, CPL commands you've defined for word processing will perform your word processing shortcuts, while the spreadsheet will invoke its own unique maneuvers (SPRD.CPL) defined under the same control keys from the Spreadsheet.

CPL also works between modules. For example, you can tell it to remember how to exit from VALPAINT and take the current painting into the editor. (This isn't practical without a hard disk because of intensive disk-grinding.) Or drop into TPM and run a utility like the quick and versatile CP/M file manager, INDEXER. (I keep this one handy on my system disk.)

Mailmerging data from the CARDFILE or ADDRESS BOOK to a form in the editor is a natural for CPL. (A full tutorial for this is included in the V+III manual.) I've even designed a custom key to slip out of the editor and run SHAPER, the design-light show program supplied with VIII+. SHAPER is great for mind-breaks after an hour or two of computerized brain massage.

CPL can put the top row function keys to work from the TPM operating system, individual commands can be chained together to make super macro's and transitional menus and screens can be suppressed if you find watching them flash by at 100 mph tiring.

The definitions saved in the current CPL set can be listed anytime by typing CTRL-U followed by the PRINT key, making it easy to recall definitions you've forgotten or need to adjust.

All these capabilities are described by the onscreen keyboard picture and prompts that appear when CTRL-U is pressed. The HELP function and Valdocs manual give simple guidelines for using CPL. It's easier than it sounds, and I've found that devising my own CPL routines gives me a taste of programming satisfaction without having to learn a "real programming" language. (I dabble with RSI BASIC, but that's the extent of my software background!)

Experiment! Send me your CPL applications, definitions and ideas in care of Epson World, and we'll share them with all of you in following editions of the Valdocs Chronicles. CPL ought to prove especially powerful in spreadsheet applications...let's hear from you financial and accounting wizards!

A Mini-Tutorial on CPL.

CPL is truly easy to learn and use. Here's an example showing how to make a personal letterhead that can be called up anytime from the EDITOR any time you need it. If you have DEFKEY, but not CPL, skip step #1, simply press CTRL-U, then go to step #2.

1. Activate CPL. Make sure CPL.SYS is on your disk in the left drive, then press SHIFT and the "+/-" key (the divide key on the old style HASCI keyboard). A beep sounds meaning the Capture Buffer is open and recording your next keystrokes. A dot also appears before the clock display.

2. Enter these keystrokes to create your letterhead:

* CTRL-W (Go to top of page)
* CTRL-O, RETURN, STORE (Toggle centering on, assuming it was already off)
* BOLD, SIZE (Select font)
* Write your name. RETURN.
* Write your address. RETURN.
* CTRL-O, RETURN, BOLD, SIZE, SIZE

(This finishes by toggling centering off and returns to the normal font. Remember CPL's capture buffer is limited to 74 characters.)

3. Close the Capture Buffer. Press SHIFT +/-, closing the Capture Buffer. Keystrokes will no longer be recorded.

4. Try out your letterhead. Press CTRL +/- to play back the capture buffer. Your letterhead should automatically be printed at the top of the page in large bold letters and be centered.

If there's a glitch, start over at step #1 and fix it up. When you like what you get, permanently store this letterhead as a keyboard macro by advancing to step 5.

CPL—Continued on page 12

CP/M - Valdocs Disk of The Month

The pitch is simple: 9 programs, 15 bucks. There's something here for everyone!

We're back with a vengeance, folks. Fifteen programs and files give a total of 312 Kbytes of goodies to read, play with and use. There isn't a lame duck in the pond! Includes all the programs and instructions for unpacking this terrific bargain from the public domain. Here's what you'll get for a paltry fifteen bucks:

CALC.SYS TPM-III/Valdocs Utilities
A simple four function calculator program written in compiled RSI BASIC.

BRADFORD.LBR Printer Utility
An excellent freeware NLQ/printer enhancement program for dot matrix printers (Epson MX, RX, and FX; IBM/Epson, Star). Similar to Fancy Font but easier to operate with additional flexibility that makes it valuable for use with printers that have NLQ already built-in! Recommended!

V3SETUP.LBR V+III Documentation
Contains extensive ASCII files that explain how to set up your hard disk and ramdisk under the new version of TPM-III that supports V+III. Everything that RSI left out.

ENVELO.TPM TPM-III/Valdocs Utilities
This is a Shareware utility program written by Steve Stecklow to address envelopes using most printers that work with Valdocs+.

ENVELOPE.CPM Envelope Addresser
A graphics oriented program to print envelopes. For QX series and CP/M B versions (works in TPM but doesn't look as nice).

N41.LBR Calculator
A super number converter/cruncher/calculator. Great for those who do a lot of programming.

POOLQX.COM Fun full-graphics pool table simulation game. CP/M "B" series only.

QXRCPM0X.LQT Bulletin Board Listing
The latest compiled listing of Epson bulletin boards.

CRLE.LBR TPM-III/Valdocs Utilities
A new program by Chris Hopkins that allows you to view and print Compuserv Run Length Encoded (RLE) formatted files on your QX under Valdocs 2.0 or Higher. These files contain digitized pictures and are found on Compuserve and many bulletin boards. A few sample pictures are included.

SUPERZAP.LBR File Modification Utility
The latest version of the SUPERZAP program for Epson QX-10/16 and CP/M. It allows you to edit or customize any file including program (.COM) files, as well as view and edit disk tracks directly. Superzap repairs damaged disks and files and can un-erase files as well. Full documentation included.

Order your copy of this marvelous disk today! Fill out this order form (or a copy thereof) and send with your check or charge card number to: EPSON WORLD CP/M-Valdocs Disk of the Month, Box 369, New Boston, NH 03070 or phone in your credit card orders at (603) 487-2500 if you prefer.

MS-DOS Disk of The Month

Five great selections from the MS-DOS public domain with complete de-archiving software!

MS-DOS users, you'll love our latest from the public domain. We have a collection of yummies that will keep you occupied for at least 30 days. Here's the run-down on the five archived and compressed files waiting for your exploration. That's over 293 kbytes before de-archiving! We've even included the archiving/de-archiving software to extract the files! How easy can it get?

Here's what's on the disk:

QARC.COM De-arc Utility.
This utility unpacks archived files. Use it to get at the files packed on the disk. Operation is a snap.

DSEP.ARC Disk/File Editor Utility.
Explore the depths of your disks with grace and ease.

PROCOMM.ARC The 'SUPER' TeleCommunication Program.
This shareware software is currently one of the best on the market. If you like it, send them some money for updates and support. If not, use it in good health, but don't look for any help. Sounds like the price is about right.

POP-EPSN.ARC Resident POP-UP Printer Utility.
Manipulate your printer "on the fly". Any Epson-compatible printer will work.

RAMTEST.ARC Nitty-gritty Memory Test.
Let's you know when jungle rot attacks your system. Very good.

DIAGS1.ARC Complete Diagnostic.
Checks all features/options of IBM (yuck) compatible computers.

ARC.EXE Archiving program.
This is version 512, the newest and greatest. Use it to "arc" your backup files to save on disk space.

Order your copy of this marvelous disk today! Fill out this order form (or a copy thereof) and send with your check or charge card number to: EPSON WORLD CP/M-Valdocs Disk of the Month, Box 369, New Boston, NH 03070 or phone in your credit card orders at (603) 487-2500 if you prefer.

YES! Do not tarry, send me copies of the September '86 EW Disk of the Month as indicated at $15 each post paid poste haste!

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CPL—Continued from page 10

5. Activate CPL again. Press CTRL-U (Remember that CPL.SYS must be in the left disk drive.)

6. Using the cursor keys, move the highlighted square to the keypad number of your choice that will activate this function in the future and hit RETURN. (see fig 1.)

7. Hit HELP, ‹T›ransfer from Capture Buffer, RETURN, STORE.

8. CPL offers several options for STOREing macros. If you want this letterhead to be available from your editor in the future, press CTRL-STORE, choose ‹D›isk file, give a descriptive label to the whole keypad set (even if you haven't defined anything else yet) and STORE it as a file named EDIT. The system automatically adds the .CPL extension and will look for this file (in drive A:) whenever CTRL-U is pressed from the EDITor.

9. Try out your new letterhead-writing "program". Go to the editor and start a letter by pressing CTRL and the number you assigned the letterhead macro in step 6. (A "c" will appear in the clock window while CPL is at work.) Watch the screen as your pre-defined letterhead appears at the top of your first page. Magic, ain't it?

In a similar fashion, you can design stock salutations, and entire boilerplates of frequently used text, such as in legal letters. Your imagination (and dare we say it, laziness?) are the major limitations of CPL. Give it a try!

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It became a modern time saver: boustrouphedon. It started as an ancient Greek word.★

Contributed by John Whiting

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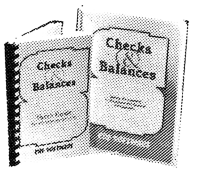

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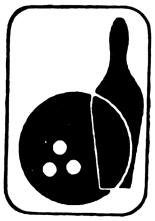

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The Epson Color Kit for QX Computers

By Jim Hansen

If you are an artist or have trouble reading normal video displays, this system is definitely for you. But hurry, once they are gone, you'll never see color like this on your Epson again!

If you've never seen high resolution color on personal computers, you owe it to yourself to see the Epson Color Monitor systems now being liquidated through various outlets at about $600. This is about a thousand less than Epson's original price, and as far as affordable personal computers go, this option kit offers a state of the art color display unmatched in quality by anything else on the market right now.

Inside the carton we found the monitor, a video cable, a replacement video interface card and an 8 page manual written in slightly fractured English, clearly the product of Japan, not America. (How about step two: "Dismantle the option slot compartment cover.")

Installation

Installation, as they say, is a breeze, and for those of you who have never looked inside your computer, don't worry. It takes probably 10 minutes if you stop for a coffee break about half way through. All it amounts to is removing the top cover of your computer system, removing the video driver board (or both boards if you have a QX-16), plugging in the color controller, and putting everything back together.

In all, I'd say the biggest problem installing color on a QX-10 is locating all the screws that hold down the controller. They seem somewhat camouflaged, and you'll probably miss one or two on the first try. Be sure to keep track of screws as they are removed since they won't do your system any good if you leave one lying loose on the mother board.

After your system is back together, connect the color monitor to your system via the new video cable (no, the old one won't work), plug in the AC power cable, turn on everything and sit back while your computer boots up. Unlike your green screen monitor, you'll see a series of lines moving on the screen until the system actually initializes the controller.

Operation

The color monitor has a power switch conveniently located on the front of the monitor. QX-10 owners will probably forget to turn off the monitor at first since it is no longer powered by the computer itself. You gently push the button to turn on the monitor, and another time to turn it off. This is a classy switch that has almost a "keyboard" feel to it. There's no resistance or "click" as it activates the power supply.

QX—Continued on page 14

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QX—Continued from page 13

The screen is matted to reduce glare and reflections and measures about 13 inches on the diagonal. This compares to about 11 on the standard QX-10 monitor and displays noticeably larger characters than you are used to.

Controls for brightness, contrast, horizontal and vertical sync, vertical size and centering are located in a compartment on the left side of the monitor. The compartment door is cleverly designed so that you press it once to open it, then again when closing it. Sort of like the disk drives.

The controls themselves are easily adjusted at arms length from your normal viewing distance. Labels for them are printed on the inside of the door so you can tell what is what with the door open. You don't have to get up and squint into some black pit where electricity might get you by the thumb.

As far as operation goes, you'll find no difference with the color board installed, although CP/M and TPM users may notice a slight degradation in display speed. This is only because all displays shown with the color kit use the "graphics" mode, rather than the "character" mode. Since Valdocs normally uses the graphics display mode, you're not likely to see much difference at all.

At least not until you run a color program such as ValPaint, ValDraw, or something written in RSI BASIC that specifically uses color. Then your eyeballs are going to fall out. Our beloved Valdocs+III seems to use only green.

Epson did a good job matching the green of the color monitor with that of the QX-10 and QX-16 monitors. Although I now think it is slightly more yellow, my first impression upon seeing a color system was that it was just a different, larger monitor. Overall, unless you are sensitive to color differences, you'd probably swear the same until you see the color.

Photo 1 - The Epson Q804A color monitor. This 13 inch monitor is much larger than the standard QX monitor.

Picture Quality

Let me just say this: it is superb, unmatched by anything comparable on the MS-DOS market, including the Taxan 640 color system which I have used for several months. The dot resolution is as nearly flawless as I have seen in anything short of $15,000 engineering work stations.

Can you believe shipping a high resolution color system half way around the world without any need of color convergence on arrival? I know our review unit was untouched since the carton was still factory sealed, and the UPS people managed to keep their record going strong by kicking a few holes in the carton.

Manual

The manual, aside from the translation problems mentioned earlier, is adequate as far as installation goes. Except for detailing the connector pinout and describing the required video signals, no maintenance or convergence information is provided. Further, it would appear that Epson as yet has not made a technical manual available, even to the liquidators.

A Subjective Appraisal

The color monitor and board are unquestionably built to the same high standards established by the QX-10. The fit of the plastic molding is absolutely perfect at every joint, and there is not a flaw to be found. The display and electronics performance would be hard to beat even when measured against $2500 monitors. We are talking about a class piece of machinery here.

As an engineer, I can appreciate the work that went into this product, and shake my head when I think of all the

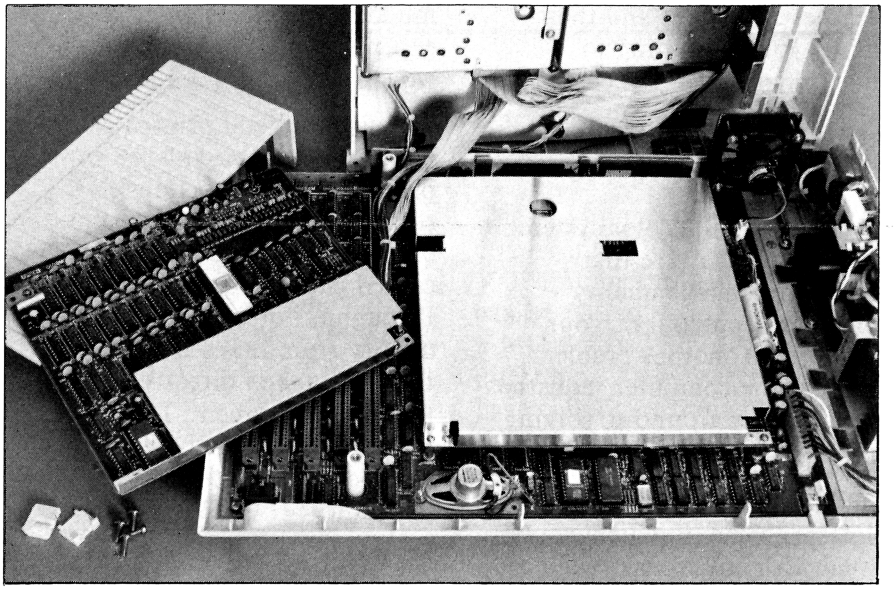

Photo 2 - Installation of the color face is simple. Just swap it with the one inside your QX computer.

money and engineering effort spent in making this system ready for production, only to have it scraped before the market was tested or developed. (I could say the same thing about the entire QX product line, but that's another story.)

The Epson color system was available before the 1984 NCC convention in Las Vegas. At that time Rising Star had six systems in the country, several of which were shown in the RSI booth running early versions of ValPaint and ValDraw, both in brilliant color. I can still remember the frustration felt by both Rising Star and a gentleman from a New York art college when he said, "I'll write you a check for 50 of these systems right now if you can deliver them in 60 days."

Another salesman (from Zilog, I believe) looked over the shoulder of ValDraw's author Bill Volk and told him (with no small bit of amazement) that the Valdraw and QX-10 system was faster and more powerful than a 68000 CAD system he had just helped install and deliver the week before the show.

Another incredulous viewer actually checked all the cabling to the monitor; he was sure there was a big processor hidden under a box nearby. All he found was the QX-10 and a hard disk.

Needless to say, the forementioned check wasn't written. Epson hadn't finished "evaluating" the color system, and Valdocs, well, it was going to be ready "real soon" and we all know the rest. Folks, all this happened more than two years ago. I was there. I personally saw it happen. It's very sad.

Is Color for You?

Is an Epson color system something useful that you should buy before they are all gone? There are at least two compelling reasons for considering it, especially at the closeout prices we are seeing today.

If you are artistically inclined or color for customer presentations with your Epson computer, the answer is unquestionably yes. This is the only game in town for high resolution, high quality artistry and display. ValPaint and ValDraw are both competent, professional tools useful for artists and designers. And both work flawlessly in conjunction with the Epson color monitor system.

The design capabilities of ValDraw were noted by professionals at trade shows as long as two years ago. Valpaint, in the current release with Valdocs+III, offers a wide selection of pre-mixed colors, lettering fonts and other professional features that make MacPaint look a little gray (all puns intended) by comparison.

Another logical reason for considering this system is that the characters displayed on the color monitor are much larger and easier to read than on standard QX monitors. If your eyes are feeling the effects of "10 years before the tube" or you have trouble reading a normal screen, this system is what you are after.

I am well aware that common knowledge says "color systems are always less sharp than black and white displays, and are therefore not as good for text applications." The Epson color system is the exception. It is easily as sharp as any black and white display you'll find on the market today, bar none.

Some Other Considerations

All is not peaches and cream, however. The color option board will limit your computer if you run MS-DOS. You can't use it on your QX-10 with the Titan Board installed or with MS-DOS on the QX-16. That's the bad news.

However, International Trading

QX—Continued on page 16

QX—Continued from page 15

Corporation has a modification in the works that will let QX-16 owners use the Epson color controller and monitor for both the MS-DOS and Valdocs-TPM-CP/M environments, eliminating any swapping of controllers, monitors or cables.

The modification is complicated and will involve shipping the monitor back to California. We'll bring you the news as soon as it's available.

The only software available for color applications right NOW is ValPaint, ValDraw and RSI BASIC, all good software available at quite reasonable prices. In all candor though, except for a few new programs in the works from the IPG, it is unlikely you'll see much anything else for the QX computer until the MS-DOS modification just mentioned becomes available, and then only if you are willing to brave MS-DOS.

You Want it on Paper Too?

If you decide the color system is for you, be aware that getting reasonable quality color hard copy out of your computer is another problem, one that the computer industry hasn't gotten around to solving really well.

ValDraw supports a variety of plotters, some of which can be fitted with color pens, such as the Epson HI-80 pen plotter. It can also drive, as ValPaint requires, a dot matrix printer.

As for printers, forget the JX-80 color printer. The beautiful color mixing possible on the color screen is completely lost on this printer. The colors printed by it are weak and muddy, and the ribbons are expensive and don't last very well.

If you want good printed color, you need a Diablo ink jet printer which unfortunately requires constant maintenance, expensive ink and specially coated paper, and has the throughput of a snail. But the quality from it is second only to a slide taken directly from the monitor screen. This printer is supported by the Valdocs Picture Utility program.

So we repeat the question: do you need or want color for your Epson computer? If so, you'd better buy now and ask questions later because as they say, truthfully in this case, "they don't make 'em like they used to", and "once these are gone, you'll never see them again." Unfortunately for us, they aren't kidding this time.★

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by Lonny J. Brown

QX-10 and 16 users will be delighted to discover the latest and greatest software release from Independent Programmers' Guild, called First Edition!. (The exclamation mark is part of the name.) A "desktop publisher's toolkit" by Dan Oja, it's basically a page-layout composer, combining very elementary wordprocessing, page formatting and "ValPaint-like" editing.

It's perfect for creating newsletters, manuals, reports, flyers, or any other text-graphic documents where visual arrangement and impact is important. It provides a variety of character styles, text columns in any size and shape, and compatibility with any ASCII text file made with word processors such as VAL+, WordStar and Peachtext.

Unlike word processors which address pages in characters of text, First Edition! sees text graphically, allowing manipulation of screen areas as parts of a picture. These areas can be moved, stored and retrieved as blocks, dimensions and locations of text columns can be controlled, and pictures can be placed anywhere on the page.

Erasure is accomplished canvas-style, much like ValPaint, and there's a scanning feature that quickly and smoothly scrolls the full working page up and down for easy reviewing and editing.

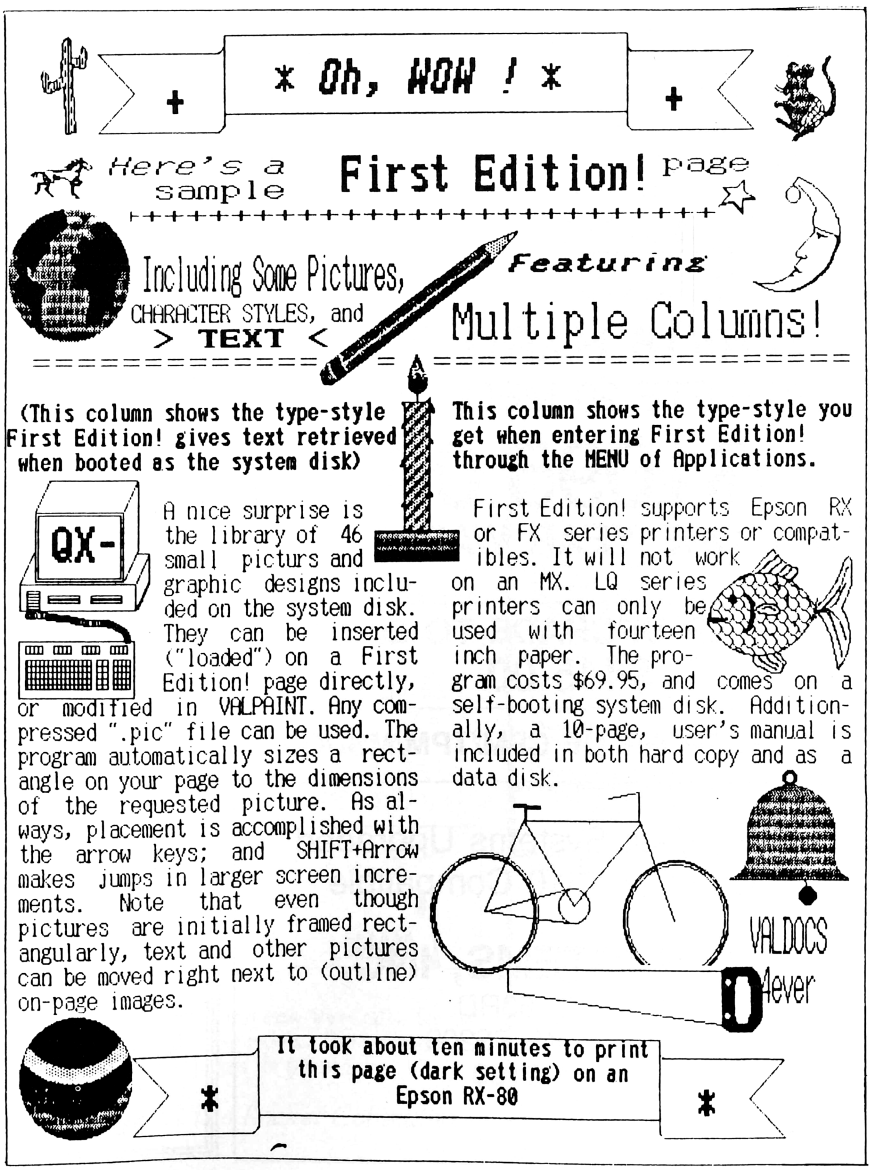
The program is one-way compatible with ValDraw and ValPaint; pictures from PAINT can be placed on a First Edition! page, but due to size differences, a First Edition! page cannot be brought into PAINT. Images from RSIBASIC can also be used.

Text can be put onto a First Edition! screen/page two ways: directly from the keyboard, or from a text-only, non-justified ASCII or ".doc" file from any word processor. (Valdocs files must be stored as "non-indexed" files before they can be used.)

First Edition! loads text from files into the "current area", a mini-window on the screen that you have defined. Once loaded into the window, the text is a "graphic image" that can be manipulated any way you like. First Edition! allows use of the normal screen characters or a slightly different "newspaper" style.

Hyphenation, a pain in any composition project, is

Review—Continued on page 18


* Oh, WOW ! *
Here's a sample First Edition! page
Including Some Pictures, CHARACTER STYLES, and > TEXT <
Featuring Multiple Columns!
(This column shows the type-style First Edition! gives text retrieved when booted as the system disk)
This column shows the type-style you get when entering First Edition! through the MENU of Applications.
QX-
A nice surprise is the library of 46 small picturs and graphic designs included on the system disk. They can be inserted ("loaded") on a First Edition! page directly, or modified in VALPAINT. Any compressed ".pic" file can be used. The program automatically sizes a rectangle on your page to the dimensions of the requested picture. As always, placement is accomplished with the arrow keys; and SHIFT+Arrow makes jumps in larger screen increments. Note that even though pictures are initially framed rectangularly, text and other pictures can be moved right next to (outline) on-page images.
First Edition! supports Epson RX or FX series printers or compatibles. It will not work on an MX. LQ series printers can only be used with fourteen inch paper. The program costs $69.95, and comes on a self-booting system disk. Additionally, a 10-page, user's manual is included in both hard copy and as a data disk.
VALDOCS
Never
It took about ten minutes to print this page (dark setting) on an Epson RX-80

Review—Continued from page 17

manually accomplished. The program prompts whenever it is needed, indicating the maximum number of letters acceptable before a forced word-wrap occurs. You do the rest. (Dictionary time!)

If your text window is too small to hold all the text in the file, First Edition! stops while you define another area (or page) to receive it. Three files can be kept open simultaneously, ready for insertion into a page. (Think of files as "articles" which can be "continued" on subsequent pages if they are too long.)

First Edition! closes all files when it is finished with them and unlike VALDOCS, does not allow you to change the data disk during a run. This is a potential problem for very large files which may fill the disk, and an inconvenience if you don't have all the text and images for a given page on the same disk before you start. Ten 7-1/2 by 10 inch First Edition! pages can be stored on a single QX-10 disk.

Text can also be typed directly into a First Edition! page. The four character sizes available are selected as indicated by the cursor size and number. The BOLD and ITALIC keys are also active.

Making good use of the QX's "wysiwyg" (what you see is what you get) screen capabilities, First Edition! supports most of the top-row HASCI keys in VALDOCS convention. Any HASCI keys that are pre-defined by CPL must be typed with the SHIFT key to retain the HASCI function, thus avoiding unwanted effects such as spontaneous program termination and trashing of disks! (This is an undocumented incompatibility.)

First Edition! has some limitations. It doesn't offer mouse control. It's not super-fast. It lacks very small letters. Only rectangular blocks can be manipulated. (In other words, you can't "lasso" and move irregular page areas, Macintosh style). And for some reason, small block moves downward are not permitted; a block must clear its old location when moved down, but not up or sideways.

For the beginning desktop publisher, these are minor deficiencies especially considering the relatively small investment involved. First Edition! greatly enhances your machine's original mission, the creation of valuable documents. As a matter of interest, it is also one of the very first such programs offered non-MacIntosh computer systems. Eat your heart out, IBM.★

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Fluid Motion in RSI Basic

By Scott Cardozo

By use of features in the Valdocs environment intended for another purpose, RSI BASIC suddenly has sprites, an advanced graphics technique not found in other BASIC programming languages.

The spectacular graphics of the QX-10 is common knowledge and easily accessible through software such as RSI BASIC. There is a major problem, however, when you want graphics images to move around the screen in smooth flowing animation.

I've found only two ways to produce animation using RSI BASIC. One is to draw an object on the screen using a series of complex mathematical graphic commands, erase it with a similar series, move to the next image position and repeat the entire process.

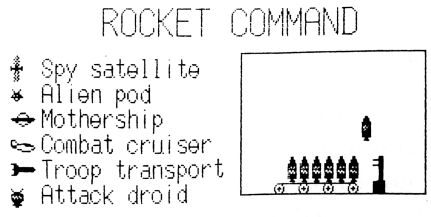
This method has two drawbacks: it can be extremely slow depending on the complexity of the object making the animation flashy and unrealistic and it is very difficult and time consuming to "draw" an object that even remotely resembles what it was intended to be.

The other method involves drawing an object on the screen using any program compatible with RSI BASIC then storing the object to disk. Your program then retrieves the object from the disk and places it on the screen using the GET@ and PUT@ commands to maneuver the object.

This approach has problems as well. It is still slow, and it will take you a long while to get it working. By the time you go through the process of creating the object then figuring out how to call it up from inside a program you'll be about ready to call it a day (or maybe a week!).

I recently discovered a new method that is both simple to use and fast. This method uses a "sprite" technique, a capability secretly hidden (actually, waiting to be discovered) in the RSI BASIC and Valdocs environment. A sprite is an image or portion of the screen that can be rapidly moved from one place to another.

Since RSI BASIC does not have "true" sprites, I devised a method using the MATRIX program to create the sprite images used in my BASIC programs. Before you begin, you'll have to make a "sprite disk" by copying the MATRIX.SYS program supplied with your Valdocs package (version 2.0 and above) to an RSI BASIC disk.


ROCKET COMMAND
Spy satellite
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Mothership
Combat cruiser
Troop transport
Attack droid
Your mission is to destroy enemy space-craft. Use the SPACE BAR to launch your rockets. When you have used up your supply of 20 rockets the game is over.

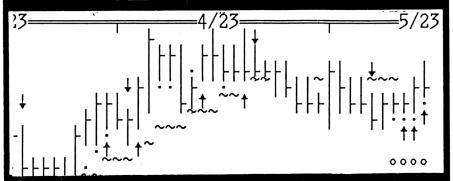
Figure 1 - The Rocket Command screen.

The MATRIX program is described by RSI as a character editor for the Valdocs graphics characters. The intended application was to allow you to edit or change Valdoc's built-in graphic characters for special applications. But because these same characters are used by the RSI BASIC graphics screen, they are also easily accessible to the programmer.

Thus each graphic character can be considered a potential sprite. In this application the MATRIX program becomes your sprite editor, allowing you to create, edit, and save up to 96 simultaneous sprites. Once

Fluid Motion—Continued on page 20

Compu/CHART 3tm



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Fluid Motion—Continued from page 19

you're happy with the sprite image developed with MATRIX, it is automatically saved in the HASCI.STL file on your RSI BASIC disk.

Before your newly designed sprites can be used, the system (technically, the Valdocs environment) must be forced to read the modified HASCI.STL "sprite" file. The simplest way to do this is to press the reset button on your computer. Remember that sprites saved to a particular RSI BASIC disk must be booted from that disk or your program will substitute whatever character patterns are found in the HASCI.STL file for your sprites.

Although I have just described a way of easily developing sprites that are useful for many applications, we aren't out of the woods yet. Our next problem is that these sprites, although functional, are small, only the size of an ordinary character. Luckily there are several ways to make them larger.

The most obvious way is to make a sprite from several characters which are printed adjacent to each other on the screen. Unfortunately this technique complicates life by making the overall sprite more difficult to create (you only get to see a small piece of your sprite at a time), and

Symbol in listing	Sprite's decimal number	What you type
!	33	1 (GS)
"	34	2 (GS)
#	35	3 (GS)
$	36	4 (GS)
%	37	5 (GS)
&	38	Q (GS)
'	39	W (GS)
(	40	W (GSS)
)	41	4 (GSS)
***	42	5 (GSS)
+	43	X (GS)
,	44	± (GSS)
-	45	1 (GSS)
.	46	2 (GSS)
/	47	3 (GSS)
0	48	E (GS)
1	49	R (GS)
2	50	S (GS)
3	*51*	*S (GSS)*

Note: GS = Graft Shift
GSS = Shifted Graft Shift

Table 1. The program listing shows italics characters in place of the actual sprite characters. Use this table to convert the characters shown in the listing to those in the right column in the table.

```
10 REM ROCKET COMMAND Copyright 1986 by Scott Cardozo
20 REM This program may be copied freely for personal,
30 REM noncommercial use and may not be sold.
40 REM
50 XXX=248: YYY=96
60 MM=192
70 RR$="""""""m"
80 LL=8
90 FONT 0
100 DISPLAY 1
110 BDRAW 39,1
120 CLS
130 CURSOR 0
140 VPRINT (80,17),,25,1,"ROCKET COMMAND"
150 PRINT@ 1,0
160 PRINT "J    Spy satellite"
170 PRINT "!    Alien pod"
180 PRINT "#$   Mothership"
190 PRINT "%&   Combat cruiser"
200 PRINT "-.   Troop transport     """""""/"
210 PRINT "0    Attack droid        )#+#+#, 2"
220 PRINT
230 FONT 8
240 PRINT "   Your mission is to destroy enemy space-craft.  Use the"
250 PRINT "   SPACE BAR to launch your rockets.  When you have used up"
260 PRINT "   your supply of 20 rockets the game is over.
270 RECTANGLE (170,28),,120,91,0
280 DATA  392, 1, 466.94, .75, 466.94, 1.25, 416, .5, 392, .5,
    349.23, .5, 392, 1.25, 416, 1.25, 440, 1.25, 466.94, 1
290 DATA 523.250,1,623.295,.5,623.295,1.5,698.460,.5,
    623.295,.5,523.250,.5,466.94,1.75
300 FOR III=1 TO 17: READ SSS, DDD:
    SOUND SSS, DDD*300, (DDD*300)/1000*64: NEXT
310 FONT 0
320 LOCATE XXX,40: PRINT " ": LL=LL-1
330 IF LL=0 THEN GOTO 510
340 MM$=FIX$(RR$,LL)
350 OO=MM
360 MM=MM+1
370 LOCATE MM,96
380 PRINT MM$
390 IF MM=OO+8 THEN 420
400 FOR GG=1 TO 50: NEXT GG
410 GOTO 360
420 LOCATE XXX,YYY
430 PRINT ""m"
440 IF YYY<30 THEN LOCATE XXX,YYY: PRINT " ": YYY=96: GOTO 320
450 FOR GG=1 TO 10: NEXT GG
460 DMODE 2
470 CONNECT (XXX,YYY+16)-(XXX+8,YYY+16)
480 DMODE 0
490 YYY=YYY-1
500 GOTO 420
510 CLS
520 CURSOR 0
530 L=20
540 M=7
550 R$="""""""""""""""""""""m"
560 P=50
570 PRINT@ 12,1; ")#+#+#+#+#+#+#+#+#, 33"
580 PRINT@ 11,21; "/"
590 RECTANGLE (0,0),,319,199,0
600 RECTANGLE (239,0),,80,16,0
610 PRINT@ 0,30; " SCORE: 0 "
620 PRINT@ 11,1; " """""""""""""""""""""m"
630 XX=160: YY=180
640 X=10
650 Y=INT(RND*100)+50
660 V=INT(RND*3)+2
670 S=INT(RND*6)+1
680 IF S=1 THEN S$="J": K=0
690 IF S=2 THEN S$="!": K=0
700 IF S=3 THEN S$="0": K=0
710 IF S=4 THEN S$="#$": K=8
720 IF S=5 THEN S$="%&": K=8
730 IF S=6 THEN S$="-.": K=8
740 LOCATE X,Y
750 PRINT S$
760 FOR A=1 TO P: NEXT A
770 IF I$=" " THEN 840
780 I$=INKEY$
790 LOCATE X,Y
800 PRINT " "
810 X=X+V
820 IF X>300 THEN LOCATE X,Y: PRINT "  ": GOTO 640
830 GOTO 740
840 LOCATE XX,YY
850 PRINT " "
860 IF YY<6 THEN YY=180: J=1: GOTO 1040
870 YY=YY-5
880 LOCATE XX,YY
890 IF Y+16>YY AND Y+6<YY THEN 920
900 PRINT ""m"
910 GOTO 790
920 IF X-4<XX AND X+8+K>XX THEN 930 ELSE 900
930 LOCATE X,Y
940 Z=Z+1
950 PRINT "'/"
960 FOR A=4 TO 100 STEP 10
970 B=100-A
980 SOUND A*10,B
990 NEXT A
1000 PRINT@ 0,31; "SCORE:";Z
1010 FOR A=1 TO 300: NEXT A
1020 LOCATE X,Y: PRINT "  "
1030 I$=""
1040 L=L-1
1050 M$=FIX$(R$,L)
1060 O=M
1070 M=M+1
1080 LOCATE M,176
1090 PRINT M$
1100 IF M=O+8 AND J=1 THEN J=0: GOTO 780
1110 IF M=O+8 THEN 630
1120 IF L=0 THEN FONT 1: PRINT@ 5,16; "GAME OVER": GOTO 1140
1130 GOTO 1070
1140 AAA=BYTE(0)
1150 END
```

because your program must now control multiple images for each sprite movement, it may run slower.

Another (and probably better) way is to use the upper left quadrant of your screen for display and to use the zoom function, BDRAW 39,1 to enlarge the sprites to four times actual size. This approach is only possible if you have the latest version of RSI BASIC.

This is the method of choice and makes use of two commands found in the back of your RSI BASIC manual. BDRAW 63,32 doubles the width of the screen and BDRAW 63,45 makes it twice as high. When combined, the sprite becomes four times actual size and the upper left quadrant of the screen fills the whole viewing area of your monitor.

Any or all of these methods can be used in combination to produce a desired effect. I used a combination of the first two to create the demonstration program "Rocket Command" shown at the end of this article.

Moving the sprite that you have created is the simplest step of all. This involves locating the position the sprite is to appear, drawing it, erasing the sprite, then repeating this process as many times as necessary until the final sprite destination is reached. Here are the steps in detail:

First, position the curser where the sprite is to be drawn using the LOCATE X,Y command. X and Y define the screen location where the top left corner of your sprite will be located.

Next, draw the sprite on the screen using a standard print

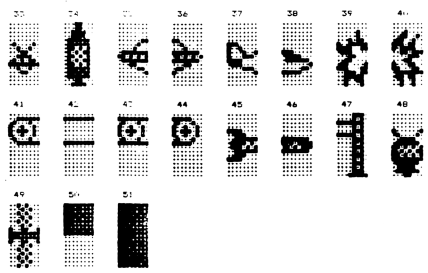

Table 2 - Sprites used in Rocket Command.

statement such as PRINT "*" where the asterisk is the sprite character. Multiple character sprites can be drawn by changing this statement to something like PRINT "-(*)-" provided the sprite image is made up of several sprites positioned side by side.

Now, erase the sprite. I usually do this is by printing a space over the sprite using LOCATE X,Y and PRINT " "

There are other ways to erase the sprite which are fancier and can make your animation more flicker free, but these usually depend on the situation and the particular sprite.

Finally, move the sprite to the next location by adjusting the X and Y position controls and repeating the above sequence, giving the illusion of motion. Remember that the shorter the move (fewer the pixels between the sprite display locations), the smoother the animation. Unfortunately sprite movement is also slower.

The advantages of "sprite" animation are obvious. First off, using MATRIX to generate the sprite lets you see and edit the image just as it will appear in the program. There is no other method that I know of that offers this capability. MATRIX-derived sprites avoid disk retrieval problems.

Also, the slow, cumbersome and comparatively complicated sprite design and retrieval process required by other techniques is performed automatically by the system when it is booted.

Most importantly, though, sprites are relatively fast. Since they are essentially characters, they are displayed on the screen at character speed. Program execution speed is limited more by your programming techniques than by display hardware.

I've included a sample program called ROCKET COMMAND that demonstrates the sprite techniques I've just discussed. I used sprites for animation of the rockets and aliens. Sprites also make up the background which includes the conveyor belt and launch tower.

The entire program actually takes place in the upper left hand corner of the screen, but it fills the whole screen because I used the zoom function described earlier to make everything on the screen appear four times larger than life.

This program is provided to serve as a living example of how sprites can be used. I have to admit it is a fairly wimpy game, but it provides a good vehicle for you to start from. Use it for reference and experimentation.

(Ed Note: If you would like to avoid typing the code and preparing the sprites used in ROCKET COMMAND (we highly recommend this), author Scott Cardozo will provide everything all ready to go on a disk, along with a few extra pre-designed sprites for $15. Contact Scott directly with your orders or questions: Scott Cardozo, RFD 1, Box 6, Contoocook, NH 03229.) ★

Valdocs Project?

Just as we were going to press this letter arrived. We pass it on to you noting that the "business people" involved with this project are very secretive as to who they are, who or what they represent, what they personally do for a living or what they actually have in mind.

EW was assured that the project, whatever it is, would be "independent" of RSI (or soon would be), but absolutely no hard details were revealed.

I would have to agree that Valdocs and HASCI have little future in becoming widely accepted. Whether or not your "support letter" will do any good, well, time will tell. Probably the worst that could happen is that you'd be out a stamp and on another mailing list.

---jmh

09/14/86

To: All Epson Users Groups
Subject: Support for the future of VALDOCS

A crisis exists, and as Users, your support is needed. It has begun to look as though there's no future for VALDOCS and HASCI. RSI is not doing well, and has struggled for months just to survive. Shipments of VAL+III are terribly behind schedule, and any future progress is in serious question. The situation is dismaying.

But it doesn't have to remain that way. A group of business people have been working for months to see if there is some way to save VALDOCS and HASCI from the fate of RSI, and to see if it can be debugged, enhanced, and ported to new environments. Extensive effort has been conducted to assess past mistakes and plan future courses of action.

VALDOCS/HASCI are excellent concepts, and handled properly, there is no reason that VAL should not be an overwhelming success in the marketplace!

We have found some backers who believe there may be a future for Valdocs, but they are looking for hard evidence of a

Valdocs—Continued on page 23

These custom stands for the QX-10/16 and Epson printers are made of heavy gauge 3/8 inch clear acrylic with polished edges and non-skid feet. The QX-10/16's keyboard slides underneath when not in use to protect it and free desk space for other uses. Inserting disks is easier and screen is raised to a better viewing height. Sturdy printer stand provides front or rear access to paper and requires no extra desk space. Available for 80 or 100 series printers (add $3.00 for larger model). Order by mail or phone and pay by check, M.O. or C.O.D. Same day shipment and 20 day return policy. Please add $3.00 per unit for shipping and $1.90 for CODs. MD residents add 5% sales tax. Dealer inquiries invited. Additional shipping charges outside Continental U.S.

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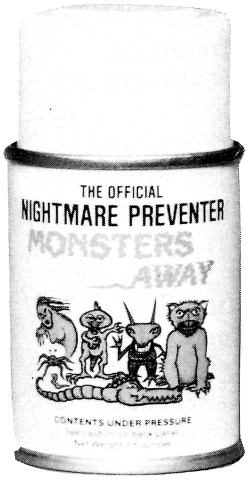

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Valdocs—Continued from page 22

continuing interest from Users in VALDOCS, despite the problems.

This is where we need your help. We have been asked to gather as many letters as possible from Users who state support for the VALDOCS/HASCI interface, and who ask for its continuation and enhancement--not only in the QX series, but also on other operating systems.

We want to hear what you LIKE about VALDOCS/HASCI. (We KNOW the problems: the bugs, the slowness, and the state of affairs at RSI...) CONCENTRATE ON THE STRENGTHS; tell us why you find VAL useful. If our potential backers receive enough mail, they may underwrite a full-scale project...one that we know would please and excite you very much!

VALDOCS would be cleaned up, enhanced powerfully, added to, and ported to new environments. VMAX (which will work on QX computers) is just the first step in our strategy!

We need your help NOW! Thousands of personal letters from Valdocs Users and enthusiasts are needed to save Valdocs. Letters on business letterhead or just your dot-matrix printer. It is essential that we receive your letters as soon as possible.

The sooner your letters pour in, the sooner we can expect funding, so you can put new Valdocs products to use!

If you have any questions, call 503-235-9068 or 916-671-7370 (evenings, Pacific time).

Send your letter to:

I SUPPORT VALDOCS
4106 N.E. Glisan
Portland, OR 97232

On behalf of the VAL project,
David W. Robinson ★

User Report...

The following is some of the best we've found on bulletin boards across the country this month. Unless of particular importance to the message, we have deleted names to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. Two bulletin boards we particularly watch are those operated on the west coast by RSI, and the ECCO board in Washington.

Topics collected from bulletin boards have been lightly edited and organized when appropriate so you can follow the flow of message sequences, giving some of the flavor of BBS telecom munications. QX-10 owners can join the fun for a $50 dollar investment in a CR-103 modem, now being sold at closeout prices.

This column is written by everyone, for everyone. Enjoy.

DATE: 08/14/86
SUBJ: Valdocs Testimonial

My girlfriend sat down to use my QX-10. If anyone is computer illiterate, she is. Afraid, too. Yet with just a few answers to her questions, she was able to use the VAL+ III editor. To me, this is the ultimate beauty of Valdocs and HASCII -- ease of use and learning.

I use an IBM-PC at work and run Xywrite, a much-praised and speedy word processor. Yet when I come home, I use VAL+ (even though I can run Xywrite on my Titan board). I'm certain that if all I had was Xywrite, my friend would have given up in minutes and get no use out of my computer--and probably any computer--at all.

I would very much like to see Valdocs continue to grow. But even if you quit right now, I'm one satisfied customer.

DATE: 08/14/86
SUBJ: Let There Be More

Re: RSI, VALDOCS, etc. Many of us have be privileged to grow up with the pains and strains and joys and triumphs of Valdocs. The prime fear I think, even with the severe critics, was that the last update or issue would be VALDONE. Please, please let there never be a VALDONE!

I am faily experienced with computers (mainly large), but I know of no other micro software that is so FANTASTIC or represents a honest to God, true, non-computer users dream. It is a shame that the Beautiful QX-10 is no longer being produced to provide a base for VAL+.

DATE: 08/16/86
SUBJ: Toshiba P321 Problem

I recently purchased a Toshiba P321 for use with my Epson QX-10, but can't seem to get the computer to acknowledge the printer. It is a parrallel/serial printer, and I've been using serial port on the printer, along with the parallel port on the QX-10.

The self-test on the printer suggests all is well with it. I'm a little embarrassed about asking for help with this problem, but I can't figure it out. Is there a particular configuration for the dip switches on the printer which must be used in conjunction with a QX-10? I'd appreciate any help.

DATE: Unknown
SUBJ: Toshiba P321 Problem

...Just read a glowing review of the fine P321 printer in which it was said the only drawbacks of the machine were a difficult setup and it did NOT recognize standard Epson printer commands. This could be a source of your problems.

DATE: 08/16/86
SUBJ: I love my Valdocs

Two especially good qualities of Valdocs come immediatly to mind:

1. While I have not seen Valdocs + III, I understand that it now allows the activation of single key menus. I consider this a major breakthrough because it adds to Valdocs flexibility and makes this software an option not only for the neophyte but for expert users who are frustrated by having to plod from menu to menu.

2. Despite the fact that they have recently come into vogue, mouse driven, iconographically based software is not necessarily ideal for the new user. Often, iconsreferences can be arcane and not immediatly comprehensible. The HASCI interface provides an always understandable, English language based interface. If you can read, you can use Valdocs.

In its many updates, Valdocs has become a mature, all encompassing computer environment. I would like to see it continue to evolve.

DATE: 08/07/86
SUBJ: LQ-800 problem

Does anyone out there own an LQ-800, QX-16, and Valdocs +? Have two people here in Hawaii who cannot get the printer to not give double line feeds, and cannot get underlining to work correctly. Any help appreciated. Pat F.

DATE: 08/07/86
SUBJ: LQ-800 problem

...if you can tell me how your two people have their system set up, perhaps I can help. I have all three, and after an initial problem with printing out keyboard graphics, I no longer seem to have a problem. I have never had the problems you described.

DATE: 08/07/86
SUBJ: LQ-800 problem

Funny you should ask, I had the same problem and found that the printer cable needs to have pin #14 disconnected. After that was done the problems were no more. Give it a try, it will save a lot of headaches.

p.s. Sure wish I could be in Hawaii.

DATE: 08/10/86
SUBJ: LQ-800 problem

The LQ is connected to the QX with a standard Centronics cable. Dip switch settings were at first those described in the V+III manual, and then later as described by Jim Jeter personally. I have a feeling that pin #14 is the culprit, but I should be able to handle that with dip switch settings. Are you using an unmodified Centronics cable? What are your dip switch settings? Thanks for the comeback. Pat F.

DATE: 08/12/86
SUBJ: LQ-800 problem

... most of problems I have found with Epson computers to non-Epson printers is that they are not true Centonics configuration. I can't remember the pin outs, but Bob's suggestion of 14 does ring a bell with me.
---Epson Clearinghouse Users Group

Editorial Note: The above three messages clearly show some of the advantages of telecommunications. In the above case, Pat, located somewhere in Hawaii, had a problem connecting LQ-800 printers. The correct

User Report—Continued on page 24

User Report—Continued from page 23

response, disconnecting pin 14 on the connector cable, was given the same day (actually within hours) after the message was placed on the bulletin board.

==========

DATE: 08/12/86
SUBJ: Files Disappearance Trick

I use a QX16 with Valdocs 2, and today something happened that I have a very hard time to explain: two files from Editor, two whole cardfile systems AND 7 cards of mail w/log on information all disappeared, all at once. I am not knowledgeable about computer, but this seems a bit much, even for a novice.

Retracing my steps, I was editing cards for Email on Mail to make them accessible without having to call the index up each time, then zap, next thing I knew, the files were gone.

Anyone knows? Or had similar experiences? Epson QX-16 is a new system for me and Valdocs 2 is certainly VERY user friendly, but not tonite. How can I trust it? What could I have done to delete so much in so many DIFFERENT areas, two separate Cardfile systems, each/w several cards...so much.

==========

DATE: 08/12/86
SUBJ: Files Disappearance Trick

... It sounds like you removed the data disk without telling the system. NEVER remove a data disk without telling the system. You tell the system you want to change a data disk by selecting the <C>hange data disk option on the Misc. menu. When the system tells you to change the disk you may then do so.

If you remove a data disk at any other time you risk losing data. Same goes for the system disk. Never remove it unless you are told to do so.

==========

DATE: 08/12/86
SUBJ: PC Pusuit

...I have been using PC Pursuit for over 5 months now and can say that much of the earlier noise problem has been cleaned up. The service is very economical from my standpoint as I make many LD calls to other target city boards frequently, and the flat 25.00 fee has more than paid for itself. I would hate to think what my bill would be like using even the cheapest LD service company.

==========

DATE: 08/14/86
SUBJ: P.C. Pursuit / GTE Telenet

I've had occasion to talk with Cliff Cummings at P.C Pursuit and he told me that besides the addition of many modules for expansion of the lines into each of the P.C. P. cities, they are experimenting with 2400 baud and it should be ready to go real soon. This will be good news, even for those of us that don't yet have 2400 capability because the system is supposed to be faster also. Right now at 1200 BPS it seems like about 900 or 1000 instead of 1200. The slowdown must be because of the equipment being used, but he assured me that it would be very fast when complete.

...someone was asking about the 503 area code....It cannot be accessed. You can call P.C. Pursuit lines from the 503 A/C but the 503 A/C cannot be called. Many of the new cities to be added will be up on the P.C. Pursuit BBS in the next few weeks. I think there are 14 now with the expansion to 20 soon - I am told.....

==========

DATE: 08/14/86
SUBJ: PC-Pursuit

The phone number of their BBS (Online User's Guide) is 1-800/835-3001 (24 hours). Registration and Information is 1-800-368-4215 (voice). This last number is open only normal working East Coast times.

==========

DATE: 08/10/86
SUBJ: VALDOCS CONVERSION TO MS-DOS

If you have a QX-16, you'll find a handy utility on your MS-DOS system disk that converts CP/M files to DOS and vice-versa... from Valdocs you'd use CTRL-Q, <S>tore as non-indexed file, <A>scii, then put that file through the converter. Other computers that run both operating systems probably have similar utilities. Alternatively, if your office system has a modem, just transmit the file over the phone. That's the easy way!

==========

DATE: 08/12/86
SUBJ: VALDOCS CONVERSION TO MS-DOS

Outside of using UNIFORM or buying modems for both machines, unless you are already have the equipment, you could direct wire the two machines with out the modems and transmit the files with no sweat.

==========

Editorial Comment: I use UNIFORM to convert files from CP/M and TPM to MS-DOS. It is no more difficult or time consuming than copying a file from one disk to another.

Both CP/M and MS-DOS versions of Uniform exist, but the CP/M version runs smoother and requires no ugly installation. It will not run under TPM, but has no trouble transfering TPM disks. Files of course can be moved across system barriers via mail programs, but these take more time and are a nuisance to set up. UNIFORM can be purchased at MicroSolutions, Inc. 125 South Fourth St., DeKalb, Il. 60115, (815) 756-3431. ---jmh

==========

DATE: 08/11/86
SUBJ: Msg From Gale Carr, RSI

Will Valdocs be available on the IBM machines? Will V-MAX become a reality? These are questions that are asked by users every day. The answer is another question. Do YOU want V-MAX? Do you feel Valdocs is important enough to spread into other areas of the computer world?

This is the time to let us know. We need to hear from as many individuals as possible, by letter or by messages left on the BBS (213-373-3709) or on Compuserve PPN 70307,325. Anyone who has ever asked, "what can I do to help", this is what you can do. Tell us what you like about Valdocs. If the PRO's outweigh the CON's let us know. Believe me, we KNOW the CON's.

Thank You, Gale

==========

DATE: 08/14/86
SUBJ: PC2 Graphics

...there is no Graphics adaptor board for the PC2. However, the manual indicates that the PC2 emulates the IBM/Hercules color graphics in its present configuration, in mono, of course. Graphics are obtained when provided by the program by pushing the STYLE key once. Once again toggles back to text mode. ★

==========

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Obscure Software is Often a Best Buy

By Peter Goulet

You've got your QX-16, now it's time to look at the software that will run on it...and there's a lot. Valdocs is so easy to use that you don't really have to say much about it. However, listing other software, particularly MS-DOS software that will run on the QX machines is certainly helpful because there's a lot more MS-DOS software that will run on our machines (I have both QX's) than we may have initially thought.

The engineers at Epson say that the source of incompatibility on the QX-16 is in the hardware connections they were forced to make on the main board. This means programs that load and work through MS-DOS calls will probably execute perfectly. The biggest problem seems to lie in the fact that the keyboard is hooked to port 13 on the board and some MS-DOS software looks for it at port 60. It is this software, which can't recognize the keyboard, which is incompatible.

Fortunately this is not a common problem. There is a tremendous amount of somewhat obscure, specialized first-class software that will run on the QX-16, making this computer a steal for Valdocs users at the close out prices as low as $800. Here are a few of the programs that I've run on this system that may be valuable to you.

* VP-Planner (Paperback Software) is a 123 (spreadsheet) clone that has even more features than the original. It goes for $59 in some outlets and lists at $99. It will execute 123 templates (all I've tried so far) and execute 123 macros. By the way, if you think the Valdocs spreadsheet is as powerful as 123, forget it. There's no contest, unfortunately. Valdocs' spreadsheet is a stone axe in comparison. It also appears that the rest of PB Software's stuff should run also.

* Microsoft Word 2.0 and the new 3.0, as well as WordPerfect 4.1 run fine. I don't think they hold a candle to the ease of use of Valdocs, but then I'm prejudiced. I've used Valdocs since it has been available. I put up with its quirks because nothing else does some of what Valdocs does and every time I show people what I do with it they just shake their heads. Incidentally, I haven't tried this but I am willing to bet the MS-DOS version of Multiplan also works. I'd be surprised if Microsoft had constructed these two look-alike programs differently.

* Ready (memory-resident) version of Think-tank) will not run. Too bad, it's neat.

* Dos 3.xx from Zenith will load and seems to run ok.

* Value Screen Plus (and data) from Value Line. This is a program for screening and analyzing stock data. It is designed for Value Line's data and is provided free with a

Obscure—Continued on page 26

MS-DOS is Just Like CP/M, Only Different

By Jim Hansen

You've made the plunge and bought the Titan Board for your QX-10, a QX-16 or an Equity Computer, and now it is time to try out MS-DOS. If you have used CP/M before, you can probably get by for a few days by pretending there isn't anything different.

But underneath the ordinary-looking MS-DOS A: prompt, there's a whole new world. You probably sensed this when you found the MS-DOS manual looked more like a programmer's guide than anything useful. There are about a million things you can do to MS-DOS itself before running your first program. The options and setup commands are all clearly explained, but the question "how is all this stuff used?" is not answered in the manual.

It seems reasonable to begin exploration of MS-DOS with a look at its directory structure. MS-DOS, remember, is an operating system meant to handle far more data than practically possible on the older CP/M machines. CP/M (and TPM) allow you to partition a disk into "user areas", each isolated from the other. CP/M allows 16 user areas, and TPM 255.

Partitions are primarily useful after your system grows into a hard disk where you suddenly have to keep track of the 10 or

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trial subscription to the data (list $99). One of the PC magazines ran a whole issue on stock market software and this program came out on top in the category of fundamental analysis. It shares data with 123 and most of the modem-based news services that supply quotes.

It is powerful and fast and even has a throw-in portfolio manager included. It works especially well on the QX-16 because of the quad-density disk. The program, the data updates, and the needed screening files all fit easily on one disk.

With this package you can screen the whole Value Line data base in less than a minute and develop a list of stocks that satisfy a group of up to 37 criteria. Reports can be printed for up to 20 or more variables for any subgroup of stocks with normal or condensed print. It is extremely easy to use; a very sexy program. I paid for a year's subscription and the software the first day. It is available from Value Line and regularly advertised in PC-type magazines.

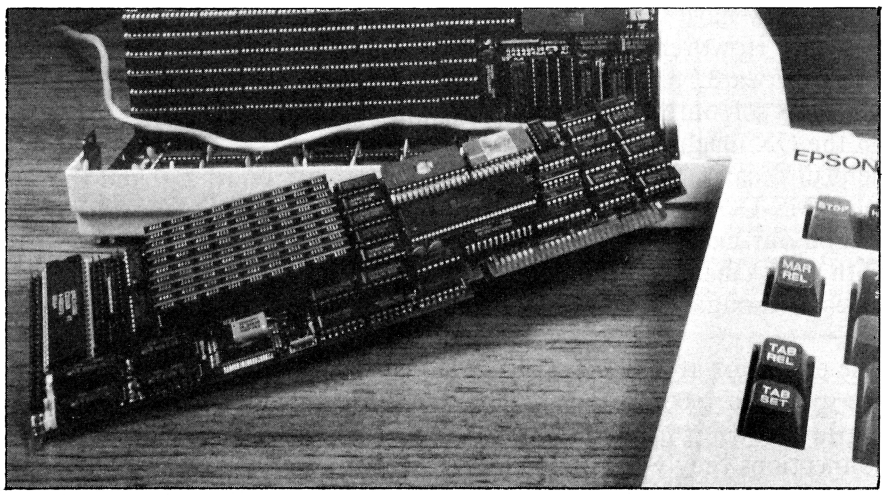
* Q & A, the new integrated, artificial intelligence word processor, data base, etc. Won't run on the QX-16.

* Ultra Comp 1.1 (Galen Research, Inc., 1407 Catherine St., Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613) will run. This is a slick, relatively cheap (under $40) very powerful, memory-resident calculator. This was written by a university colleague of mine to provide himself with powerful calculator functions on his computer. This thing does all the basic calculator functions plus permutations, combinations, trig, normal curves, and so forth with 800 digit precision!!!

It has ten "memories" and basically emulates the typical pocket scientific calculator. If you have a QX-16 and want this type of tool, it is neat. My colleague tells me the next version (probably a year away) has even more features planned. I don't get a cut for his sales; I just think this is one of those obscure software packages that is high-quality and useful and that no one knows about. (Phone orders at 319-266-3887).

This is all I've tried so far. The QX's are good machines. I hope all you readers will try new and different software, by hook or crook, and share the results with us. I don't do bulletin boards yet so they are not a helpful forum for me at least right now.

(Ed note. OK, all you readers. How about it? What obscure software do you have running on your machines? Write us a note about your discoveries so we can share them with others. Address your mail to Epson World, Box 369, New Boston, NH 03070.) ★



What is it? *Hint: It plugs in QX computers, is made by Semi-Disk and makes Valdocs run fast. Available soon.*

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20 megabytes of data. Where you previously organized data by the floppy method (accounting records goes on one, business letters on another, billing on a third, etc.), a hard disk lets you keep everything on one disk, and you can easily destroy your mental health by combining all data and programs of every description into one mixed up hodge-podge, the obvious way to do it.

USER AREAS as provided by CP/M and TPM are a rigid, not-very-friendly way of partitioning your data and programs. There are limitations on how programs or data can be accessed, and generally if you are in one area, it is clumsy, if not impossible to reference data in another. CP/M, for example, won't even let you check the directory outside the current user area.

MS-DOS uses a tree-structured directory system rather than the user area concept. When your system is first turned on, MS-DOS prompts from the "root" directory of your default data disk. The root directory looks

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and works pretty much like a directory in CP/M, except that it can hold other directories as well as the usual programs and data.

The other directories, in turn, can hold even more programs, data and still other directories. In theory, there is no limit to the number of directories your system can have. Since directories are named, rather than numbered, the directory tree structure (if properly used) can resemble an outline to the data stored on the disk, much like the outline to an English paper.

This clearly suggests how you can organize a large number of files and programs into categories, keeping each in a handy directory or sub-directory related to the main directory.

None of the literature you received with your Titan board or QX-16/Equity tells you how to make use of this powerful directory system, and it can easily take weeks of diddling to come up with a good solution unless you plan your system in advance. So what I'll describe is my solution to hard disk organization. My use is pretty much ordinary, and given this example may help you understand how to apply MS-DOS to your particular needs.

The first rule I adopted was simply that the root directory would not be used to store ANY programs or data (with three exceptions I'll talk about sometime later). Only directories are stored in the root directory.

If no programs are to be stored in the root directory, then we need a place to keep all the utilities and other "garbage" that comes along with the MS-DOS disk. I call this directory my "DOS" directory, and keep all my system utilities such as DISKCOPY, COPYIIPC, PARKALL, NORTON EDITOR, COMP, SIDEKICK, QDOS and the like there.

There are probably 30 or 40 programs in my DOS directory. I just plop new ones in, because unless there is an update, I really don't want to ever throw any of these away or even look at them. This directory is a mess and probably could use a good house cleaning, but I'm lazy and since I haven't run out of disk space yet, I'm leaving it alone. Never fix something that isn't broken. I'll describe some of my favorite programs in there sometime later.

Since I am a professional writer and use a variety of wordprocessing systems, I made a directory called "WORDP" for wordprocessing. Under this directory I have several other directories:

* WP for WordPerfect
* VW for Volkswriter
* MS for Microsoft Word
* MM for MultiMate Advantage

and others.

Under each of these word processing directories I have directories that hold stories and projects being written on each of the word processors. For example, under WP (the word processor I use most) I have SHAKERS, research materials on an article about the Shakers, HERB, newsletters and mailing lists for our local herb club, etc. Other word processors have similar subdirectories.

Looking back at the root directory, other "parent" directories hold programming tools for C, Pascal, BASIC and other software categories that suit my needs. Individual projects related to these directories are stored in subdirectories under the parent entry.

Getting your hard disk organized takes effort, but if you analyze the software you are currently using, it soon becomes apparent that certain things are used together. These should be loaded in the same or related subdirectories.

Early in the game I started out loading the "entire" software package delivered on the original floppy, READ.ME files and all. Since then I've discovered that I don't READ.ME, ever. And all that installation junk is never used a second time, so it isn't worth loading either. This becomes more apparent when your 20 meg disk is down to 3 or 4 megs of storage and you wonder where it all went.

Take a tip: Don't load anything on your hard disk that you won't use.

The DOS commands you need to set up directories are MD (make directory), CD (change directory) and RD (remove directory). I have also made a batch file called MC that automatically makes a directory, then changes to it.

In order to move around in the directories you've made, you'll also find the backslash command (\) which tells DOS to go back to the root directory, and the ".." command to step toward the root directory one level.

If we are going to be moving around in directories, it might be handy to have MS-DOS tell us

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where we are. The PROMPT command lets us do that. At your system prompt, type the following:

A› PROMPT PG (return)

This causes DOS to print out the current directory along with the usual prompt so we can see where we are. After the command has been entered, you will see a new prompt (A:\›) indicating you are now in the root directory. Now let's make a few "test" directories to see how this all works together. Bring your system up so you have the system prompt from the root directory on the screen. I'll assume this is your A:\› prompt, but if you are running a hard disk it will probably be your C:\› prompt.

Make a new directory called MAINTEST:

A:\› MD MAINTEST ‹return›

Now, type DIR /W to see a directory of the programs on your disk. Somewhere you'll see an entry for MAINTEST with a suffix DIR indicating that this is a directory, not a file. (The /W option on DIR makes the directory listing using the "wide" display rather than a single column.)

Enter the MAINTEST directory by typing CD MAINTEST ‹return› at the system prompt. Note that your system prompt indicates that you are in now the MAINTEST directory. If you list the directory again, you'll see there are no usable files stored in MAINTEST.

Now make a subdirectory in MAINTEST, call it TEST1, then move into it:

A:\MAINTEST›MD TEST1
A:\MAINTEST›CD TEST1
A:\MAINTEST\TEST1›

See how the prompt now shows that you are in the TEST1 subdirectory under MAINTEST. Go back to MAINTEST by typing:

A:\MAINTEST\TEST1›CD . .‹return›
A:\MAINTEST›

You can also do it the hard way by typing CD \MAINTEST. You can return to the root directory by typing either of these commands:

CD \ ‹return›
CD . .‹return›

Let's remove the test directories. MS-DOS has two rather well enforced rules about removing directories. They can't be removed unless they're empty, and you can't be in the directory being removed, heh, heh.

So, to remove the TEST1 directory, return to the MAINTEST directory, type:

A:\MAINTEST›RD TEST1

If you do a directory from MAINTEST, you'll find TEST1 is gone. Pretty spiffy, eh, what?

Now, how does one move files in and around these directories? Assuming COPY is in your A: root directory, you can copy a file from your root directory to the current directory thus:

A:\NEWTEST›A:\copy filename

Or from another disk:

A:\NEWTEST›\COPY B:FILE.* /V

The /V verifies the copy is good. No need to worry about the directory on B:; directory changes only apply to the specific disk drive involved. Unless you changed it, the system will use the B: root directory in this case.

The backslash tells MS-DOS to look to the root directory for

MS-DOS—Continued on page 29

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Using a Bulletin Board System the First Time

If you've been thinking about getting into telecommunications, now's the time to strike!

As most of you know by now, Epson has been dumping the results of their first three years of computer marketing experience into the liquidation channels. This has been a bonanza for everyone. Imagine QX-10 computers originally priced at $2995 being sold for less than $1000 and QX-16's discounted by nearly $2000. And now DAK Industries is selling the PX-8 along with a printer for about $700, an incredible bargain.

But what may have escaped your attention is the Comrex CR-103 modem. It's on the block as well. Prices seem to be hovering around the $49 range but readers have reported them as low as $35, condition unknown. The CR-103, although restricted to 300 baud operation, is totally compatible with Valdocs MAIL, and there's a whole new and exciting world to explore under that key. For you more technical types, an XMODEM-like program for use with CP/M was provided by Comrex on a disk; if you're lucky it will still come with the liquidated stock.

If you're interested in telecommunications at a bargain price, the CR-103, Valdocs MAIL and your phone is all it takes.

Valdocs Configuration

Let's assume you've taken the plunge, paid your $50, and have plugged the 103 in the accessory bay of your computer and connected your phone line to the modular jacks on back of the modem according to the instructions that came with it.

Before you can use the CR-103 Valdocs must be told about your new peripheral. First, go to SETUP and select the "Communications Characteristics" menu. Make the following selections:

Modem Type: CR-103
Modem Installed: Yes
Duplex Mode: Full Duplex
Baud Rate: 300

For now you can leave the rest of the menu options the way they are. Press the STORE button to save your settings. Now go to MAIL by pressing the MAIL key.

The Address Book

The first thing MAIL asks you is where to put the "Address Book". Valdocs keeps track of all the people and phone numbers you enter (along with other information about your system) in an "address book" file.

This file can be saved on the system disk or on a data disk. Some people like to keep it on the data disk because it is always in the system (but almost always "full"), while others keep it on a special "MAIL" disk.

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the COPY program and if appropriate, the file to be copied, but this can be a drag to have to remember every time. Next month we'll describe how to avoid this tedious labor and talk a little about batching (pun intended).

That's it for this month. Your homework assignment is to check out the PROMPT command. It is versatile, and as you've just seen, quite useful. Also try your hand at the MC batch program described earlier and listed below.

If it is running properly, from the system prompt you should be able to type:

A:\› MC NEWTEST

and the system will return:

A:\NEWTEST›

This indicates that you have just created the directory "NEWTEST" and have moved to it.

Happy computing!

Program Listing for MC.BAT

```
REM Make a new directory,
REM then change to it.
REM
REM Use: MC NEWDIRECTORY
REM
MD %1
CD %1
```

★

Bulletin—Continued from page 29

The advantage of a separate MAIL disk is that it can be kept nearly empty so large files can be received without fear of filling it up. The choice is yours, but now we'll assume you put the address book on the data disk.

At this point, your Valdocs MAIL system initializes and puts the normal starting menu on the screen. Since this is the first time you've used MAIL (we assume), there are still a couple more things to set up. Select the "Miscellaneous" option, and from there choose "User Identification".

You can fill out the top of the identification form. If provided, (it is optional), Valdocs will send your name to other Valdocs systems along with your normal electronic mail messages (E-MAIL). Your name will then appear in the "In Basket" along with the rest of the message log entry, automatically showing the recipient who sent. (This is a convenience feature not often found in other systems.)

You can also fill in the long distance and local prefix-/suffix options. Check your Valdocs manual if you want to use them. Personally, I find them a nuisance for home use. I always enter dialing prefixes when they are required in the normal address book. This way I can easily determine exactly what is being dialed without digging through the system. The purpose of this option is to let Valdocs automatically append the "1" for long distance or other required office switchboard codes, but I'd rather do it myself.

Next select TONE or PULSE. If you live in an area served with touchtone telephone service, by all means try this option, whether or not you have bought touchtone service. In many areas served by touchtone, you'll find it works for you. Your computer will dial faster, and it won't cost you anything. Otherwise, select the PULSE option.

Many versions of Valdocs 1.1X had a feature (actually, it was a bug) that prevented pulse dialing of "zero" from the CR-103. (It sent out 255 pulses, rather than 10.) All versions of Valdocs as far as is known work fine in the TONE mode. So if you are still on a stone age telephone network using pulse dialing and haven't made the switch to Valdocs 2 or higher, you're in trouble!

You can set the top window of MAIL to display any of the choices shown under the "Initial Top Window" option. The top window is the space above the MAIL Menu that we just left. It doesn't matter what you choose, but a lot of people like to have the in or out basket displayed when they enter MAIL.

Finally, choose where you want new log entries to be shown. Some people like the latest stuff to be on top, others like things in chronological order with the latest at the bottom. Log entries are the records Valdocs keeps of messages sent to and from your system. For the most part, new users need not worry about log entries; there's plenty of other things learned about first.

So leave this and the remaining options alone until you've got the time or interest to dabble with them; they won't affect your use of the system until you're a heavy duty MAIL person anyway. Press STORE to save your choices and use the UNDO key as required to return to the main MAIL menu.

Address Cards

It's time now to prepare address cards for those people and bulletin board systems you want to call. All address cards are saved in your address book. When you want to dial another computer system, MAIL automatically locates the telephone number to dial using the last name entry on the card.

Here's how to fill out an address card. From the main menu select Address Book, then choose the "add a name card" selection. The only information actually necessary on a name card is a last name (for MAIL to look up) and a telephone number, although you can fill out everything else you wish. You'll find fields for both computer and voice numbers. Some people enter only voice numbers, using MAIL as an automatic telephone dialer. MAIL works surprisingly well for this application.

For now let's say that you want to set up a card so you can automatically dial Epson World's bulletin board. Under last name enter "EW" since there isn't any reason to type more than necessary, is there? You can fill out the first name with "BBS", perhaps "Magazine" or leave it blank.

Fill out the rest of the address stuff if you want, but unless you print labels from the address book, it won't serve any particular purpose.

If you fill out the voice phone, as just mentioned, MAIL can dial voice phone numbers. Enter 1-603-487-2500 for EW's voice telephone number. Notice

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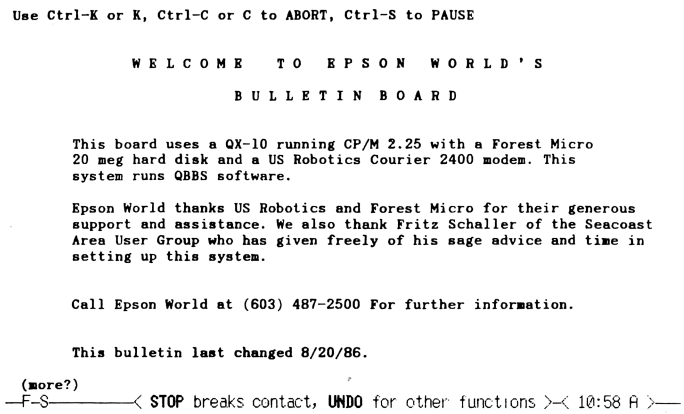
Use Ctrl-K or K, Ctrl-C or C to ABORT, Ctrl-S to PAUSE
WELCOME TO EPSON WORLD'S
BULLETIN BOARD
This board uses a QX-10 running CP/M 2.25 with a Forest Micro 20 meg hard disk and a US Robotics Courier 2400 modem. This system runs QBBS software.
Epson World thanks US Robotics and Forest Micro for their generous support and assistance. We also thank Fritz Schaller of the Seacoast Area User Group who has given freely of his sage advice and time in setting up this system.
Call Epson World at (603) 487-2500 For further information.
This bulletin last changed 8/20/86.
(more?)
F-S
STOP breaks contact, UNDO for other functions
10:58 A

Figure 1 - The Epson World BBS welcome banner.

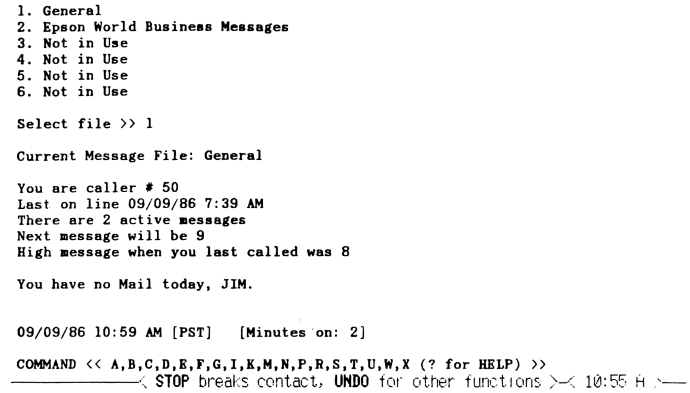
1. General
2. Epson World Business Messages
3. Not in Use
4. Not in Use
5. Not in Use
6. Not in Use
Select file >> 1
Current Message File: General
You are caller # 50
Last on line 09/09/86 7:39 AM
There are 2 active messages
Next message will be 9
High message when you last called was 8
You have no Mail today, JIM.
09/09/86 10:59 AM [PST] [Minutes on: 2]
COMMAND << A,B,C,D,E,F,G,I,K,M,N,P,R,S,T,U,W,X (? for HELP) >>
STOP breaks contact, UNDO for other functions
10:55 A

Figure 2 - After you've logged in, you are asked which message file you'd like to see.

Bulletin—Continued from page 30

that the prefix "1" is entered here, in the address book, rather than the Miscellaneous menu. And finally, enter the computer telephone number. The EW BBS number is 1-603-487-2501.

Still More is Possible

We will mention only in passing that there are two more menus under the style key. These let you "configure" MAIL for the particular computer system being called by that address card. Don't worry about them until you are ready for bigger and better things, or unless the system you call prints all sorts of funny graphic characters on the screen.

Presuming this isn't the result of bad phone lines, you'll probably be able to fix it by adjusting the parity mode and data bit options using the menu under the STYLE key. Try 7 bit data with odd or even parity. This normally cleans up such problems nicely.

Configuration Complete

Once you're happy with the address card entries, press STORE to save the card, return to the main menu (use UNDO) and you're ready to call EW's bulletin board. Select the Person to person option, then "Dial a number from card". Type "EW" for the name of the "person" to dial and press RETURN.

The address card for EW is displayed just as it was entered, and you are asked if you want to use it. When you answer yes, MAIL takes over and dials the EW bulletin board system in New Boston.

Make a Session Recording

Since this is your first use of a bulletin board system (BBS), have MAIL make a recording of everything you do by pressing the STORE button (that's all you have to do) while you're waiting for the call to go through. After the first BBS adventure is finished, you'll find a "session recording" in the in basket which can be viewed, printed and studied off line, when you aren't paying for a long distance phone call.

Log on Your First BBS

After your system connects with the EW BBS computer, you'll be asked to type any key to continue. Press a key and the "welcome" banner is printed. Since it is several screen lengths long, the listing stops at the end of every page with a (more?) prompt. Type a "y" to see more or "n" if you've had enough.

It's probably better to receive the entire banner the first time you log on, then read it later from the session recording.

On your first visit the system asks your name, city or town and a personal password. Nothing is done with any of this information except to keep private messages addressed to you out of the hands (or eyes) of others.

Answer the questions, ending each with a RETURN. Once again, use "y" for yes and "n" for no.

Your password should be an easily remembered name or keyboard sequence (up to four letters). You'll need it every time you call the system. If you forget it, you'll have to call the SYSOP to find your password for you or start over as a new user. Both options are painful! (I always put my passwords on the address cards to prevent this problem.)

After you've finished signing in, a "new user" banner briefly describes the EW bulletin board. It is fairly standard as far as bulletin boards go, but

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```
Use Ctrl-K to abort, Ctrl-S to pause.

============================== QBBS COMMANDS ================================

Message Functions          User Functions              Other Functions
=================          ==============              ===============

E --> Enter a Message      D --> Line Delay (Nulls)    A --> Additional Help
R --> Read a Message       P --> Bell Off/On           B --> Display Bulletins
M --> Read Today's Mail    X --> eXpert Mode On/Off    C --> Exit to CP/M
N --> Read New Messages    T --> Display Pause Off/On  G --> Goodbye (hangup)
K --> Kill a Message       W --> Word Wrap Off/On      I --> Inspect User File
F --> New Message File     U --> Store User Functions  ? --> Help Summary
S --> Message Summary            or New Passord

Use the '?' key for specific help at any QBBS command prompt.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------


09/09/86 11:00 AM [PST]   [Minutes on: 3]

COMMAND << A,B,C,D,E,F,G,I,K,M,N,P,R,S,T,U,W,X (? for HELP) >>
<< STOP breaks contact, UNDO for other functions >> 10:55 A
```

Figure 3 - This is the display you'll get when you type a "?" in response to the command line shown in figure 2.

```
hhhhhhhhhhhh File: RECV0000.MSR      Screen:  1 hhhhhhhhhhhh

Use Ctrl-K or K, Ctrl-C or C to ABORT, Ctrl-S to PAUSE

            W E L C O M E   T O   E P S O N   W O R L D ' S

                        B U L L E T I N   B O A R D

      This board uses a QX-10 running CP/M 2.25 with a Forest Micro
      20 meg hard disk and a US Robotics Courier 2400 modem. This
      system runs QBBS software.

fhhhhhhhhhh
```

Things Afoot at Epson World

It's been a busy, chaotic month getting settled down to publishing EW. As briefly mentioned in last month's editorial, my wife Pat and myself have taken over as publishers of EW with the help of a few friends.

Naturally, we didn't get nearly everything done we wanted, but I think you'll see from our editorial lineup where we're headed.

The EW Electronic Bulletin Board System

If you have a modem, you'll be interested in our bulletin board on the east coast at 603-487-2501. You can use it at any speed up to 2400 baud, and there's a 20 megabyte hard disk with room for lots of goodies behind it.

The BBS number, published in the editorial last month, was incorrect. If you dial it as listed, you'll get Nancy Fletcher, a friend in town who by now must be nutzo. At first she thought she was being harassed by some turkey, but three days later someone actually talked to her when she answered the phone. Now she knows she's only a victim of circumstance, as are we all. Please dial 603-487-2501 to reach our board, and forget the other number forever.

About Mail...

If you write and would like a personal answer, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for our reply. We simply don't have the time to respond in a timely manner otherwise. This isn't a matter of aloofness, it's just that we would rather answer mail that needs a response as quickly as possible; please consider that responding to 10 or 20 letters a day will just about take out any other productive effort on our part. If you need a quick reply, it is really better to use our bulletin board.

Your Subscriptions

The largest majority of our mail right now concerns those of you missing the June and July issues of EW. About all I can say is that Camden is responsible for those issues. There was a problem at the printer and not all the magazines made it to the post office. If you haven't gotten those issues, please contact Camden directly, not me. Address your letters to "Camden Communications"; everything addressed to Epson World is now forwarded to me, where nothing can be done.

Another commonly asked question is "are you going to honor my subscription to...", and the answer is yes, we will keep you on the subscription list until your subscription expires.

Hello, User Groups

During the last month we made a mailing to all known user groups explaining EW's new editorial posture and hopes for the future. It is our desire to provide a national forum from which we can help one another and give the support and direction we all had hoped Epson and RSI would have done.

To this end we asked each user group to add us to their newsletter mailing list; we, in turn, will provide a complimentary subscription to EW and will maintain a national dialogue between the groups. (If your user group hasn't received our mailing, please ask your secretary to write us about it.)

Upon Horses Dead

I know what some of you are going to say about After Hours. There you go, picking on RSI again. Nope. You're wrong. We already have the next three installments in house.

I personally enjoy a good laugh, and I hope you do too. Nan has done a terrific job of cutting through to the core problems in our industry...in truth nobody really knows how to run it any better than anyone else. Its just that some are more lucky than others. But she has learned from other's mistakes, so how could you possibly do other than (chuckle, chuckle) wish DH Computer well?

Jim Hansen

The Dead Horse Computer Company

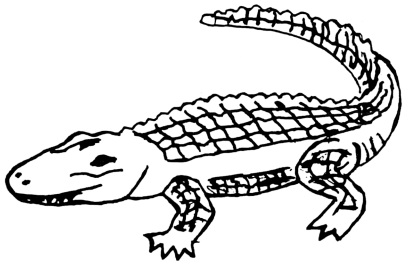
By Nan McCarthy

In my six years in the high-tech world, I've seen a lot of companies come and go. I've also seen my own job disappear twice. But I'm no dummy. Now I know how it's done, and I've decided it's time to set up my own company.

My company is going to succeed because my products are going to be the most user-friendly, state-of-the-art products ever made. They'll be all things to all people. They'll expand your mind beyond all comprehension.

First, I'm going to start a computer company. That way I can start a software company and write programs for the computer. High-tech companies are always looking for a niche. This is usually satisfied by producing obscure software for obscure computers. That's exactly what I plan to do--but my products will be like nothing the market has ever seen.

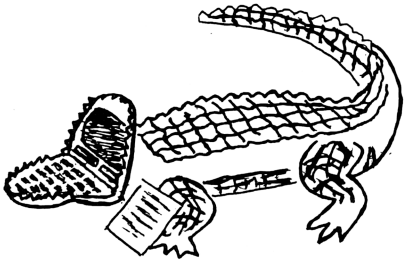
My computer company's name is DH Computers, Inc. What does DH stand for, you ask? DH stands for Dead Horse, because that's where most computers seem to be these days. I've decided to capitalize on that and turn it into a plus. The DH Computer line is no ordinary sort of computer. We are selling two models: the plain vanilla and the designer version.



The Alligator at rest.

The plain vanilla model lets you do things no computer has ever done before. That's because all the keys are blank. You can make them stand for anything you want. (I'll have more on this revolutionary concept next month.)

The designer version is for all those Yuppies out there who don't want an ugly old computer cluttering up the den. It's made in the shape of an alligator, to match the one on your shirt. Open the mouth, and you have a computer. The keyboard is where his (or her) tongue would be, and the screen is in the roof of the mouth. You stuff all those ugly tangled wires coming out of the electronics down its throat, out of sight. When you're not computing, simply close the Alligator's mouth and it becomes an objet d'art.



The Alligator computer at work.

At DH Computers, the customer always comes first. That's why when we say "A promise is always a promise," we mean it. What we don't tell you is that we take our motto literally. Our products are always promised, almost never released.

Now, for the software. Our software subsidiary is FBN Software. Naturally, FBN stands for Fly-By-Night, which is an appropriate name, if you ask me. Once again, our user-friendly, state-of-the-art software goes beyond the ordinary. All our disks are blank (to match our keyboard keys). Load the software, and you'll get a message that says "Real Soon Now." That's our motto at FBN Software, and that's when you'll see our first program...real soon now.

Well, everything's just about set. I know you don't need a marketing department. I learned that while working in the high tech field, and it should save me some money. Those marketing types are wicked greedy. I know my products are good; they'll sell themselves. No problem.

I just have a couple of more things left to get. They're expensive, but we corporate figures need them to give credibility when we go to computer shows and write articles for computer magazines.

My Jag is on order. My Mercedes is on order. My private jet is on order. I've sent for brochures from all the Swiss banks where I'll hide my money from the IRS. Once this stuff is here, all I need is to find a funny religion (maybe I'll start my own) and an office that has room for me to live in the middle of the assembly line and I'll be all set.★

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ECHO, Epson User Group of Northeastern Wisconsin, meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at Fox Valley Tech. Inst. at 7pm. Mailing address: Jean Thompson, Sec., 913 E. Glendale Ave., Appleton, WI. PH: 414-734-2391.

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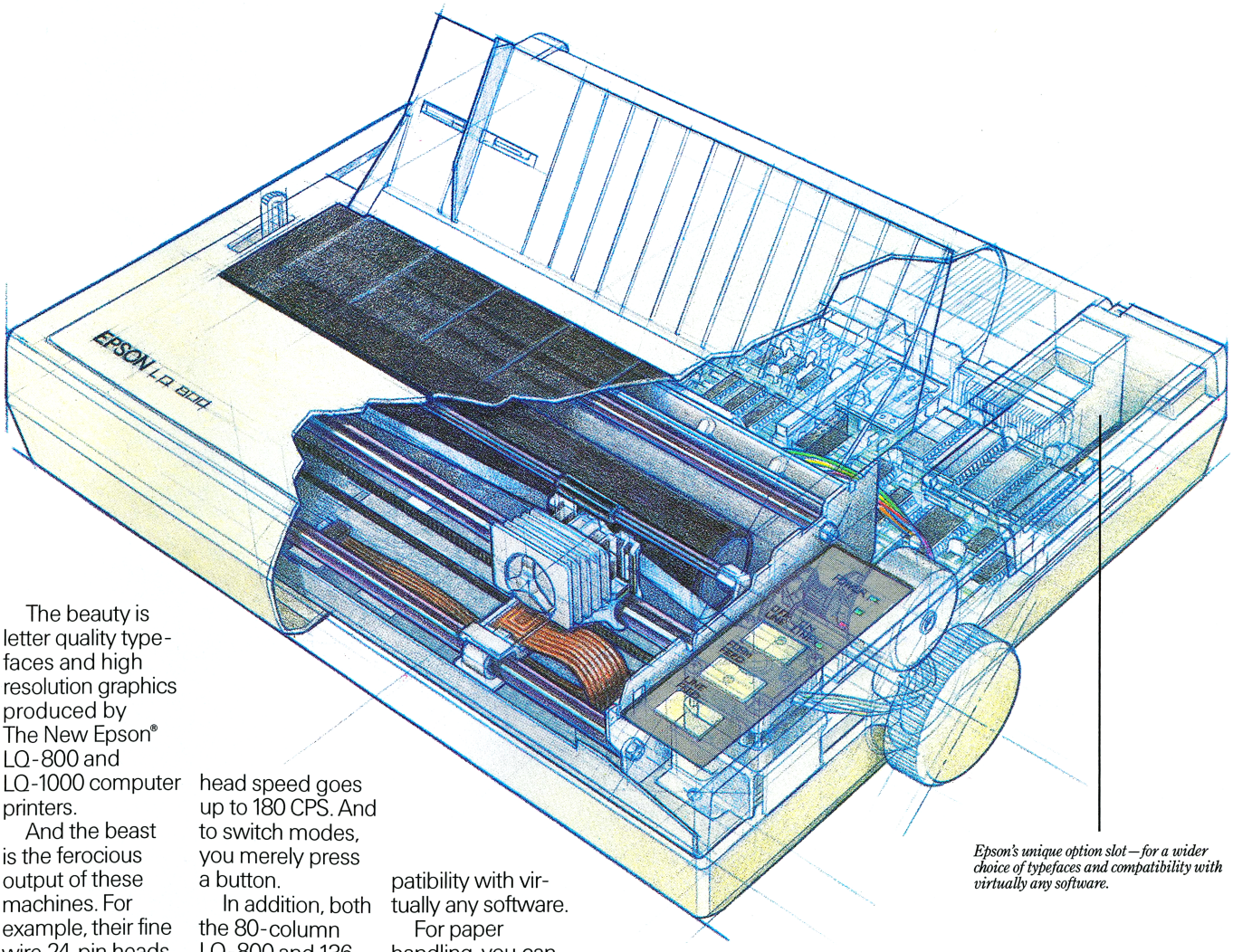

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